



40 YEARS SINCE
ROCK AGAINST RACISM

'This campaign
changed our lives'

Pages 10&11



CORRUPT OIL FIRMS BEATEN
BY NATIVE AMERICANS >>Page 17

STANDING ROCK

Socialist Worker

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Tories' STP health cuts plan stands for...

SLASH

TRASH

PRIVATISE

DOC SPEAKS OUT 'OUR PATIENTS ARE AT RISK'

by TOMÁŠ TENGY-EVANS

THE TORIES' Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) will axe health services and could push the NHS past breaking point.

England has been divided into 44 STP "footprints" and between them they must cut £22 billion by 2020. The details have been shrouded in secrecy, but will be fully revealed soon.

This is a dagger at the heart of the NHS, a service that is already reeling from cuts and selloffs.

In a sign of the deepening crisis in the NHS, children who need intensive care treatment had to be transported long distances for care last week.

Paediatric intensive therapy units (ITUs), dealing with infants and children's health, were running at 85 percent capacity last Friday. This crisis spiralled

>>Page 3



Dr Tony O'Sullivan

UNITED STATES

It is time to delete the 'alt-right'

THE MOVEMENT of bigots that Donald Trump has brought off web forums and into the White House tries to look edgy. But Nazis are at its heart.

The "alt-right" is not a movement in the sense of an organisation or a mobilisation in the streets. But its rise feeds the climate in which one could emerge.

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SOUTH KOREA



President's life of plenty could soon be over

THE BIGGEST popular mobilisation in South Korean history brought the country to a standstill last Saturday.

Some 1.7 million people took to the streets in the capital Seoul alone and 200,000 more in Busan, the traditional heartland of the ruling Saenuri party.

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ITALY

Referendum revolt fells prime minister

ITALIAN PRIME minister Matteo Renzi announced his resignation after suffering defeat in a referendum on constitutional reforms last Sunday.

The left and the unions backed the vote against Renzi.

>>Page 5

Hundreds meet to defend NHS >>PAGE 3



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'The best thing that's happened'

Singer **Kate Bush** on Tory prime minister Theresa May

'A sophisticated, feminist statement'

Uma Thurman on the 2017 Pirelli calendar, which features photos of her and others

'None of us will benefit if we scapegoat one individual'

Labour shadow minister **Fabian Hamilton** protects Tony Blair over Iraq

'The only deception is in this motion'

Labour MP **Joan Ryan** also falls in behind Blair

'If we hound Tony Blair the thing turns into a party political argument'

Tory **Ken Clarke** backs Blair

'However docile British voters may appear to be'

Ukip's **Nigel Farage** flatters us once again

'If you don't like your job you don't hold the country to ransom'

Ukip MP **Douglas Carswell** attacks post office strikers



Cops get new shock weapon as evidence of fatal use rises

POLICE OFFICERS across Britain are expected to be issued with a new and more powerful Taser gun.

The X2 model has a second shot, in case the first fails to subdue a suspect.

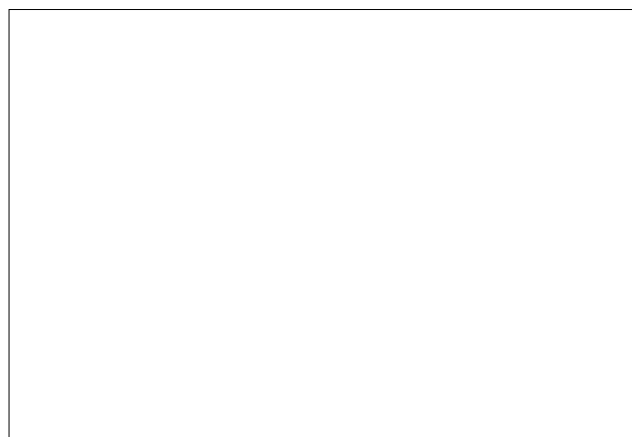
If cops wanting to Taser people twice wasn't shocking enough, there are also a bunch of additional features.

The X2 is equipped with a warning crackle of bright electric light designed to encourage suspects to surrender before being fired upon.

The current single-shot model, the X26, is 13 years old and spare parts are beginning to run out.

Its likely successor, like the current model, delivers a 50,000-volt surge of electricity to incapacitate a victim.

According to government figures, use of the devices



AMBER RUDD out on patrol

has grown over recent years, with 1,921 Taser discharges recorded by police in England and Wales in 2015.

Black and minority ethnic people are three times more likely to be on the receiving end of the weapons

when discharged by officers, according to official figures.

At least 11 deaths in Britain have followed the use of Tasers.

An inquest jury found that police use of a Taser on Jordan Begley in Manchester

in 2013 was "not reasonable" and that failings by police officers had contributed to his death.

An official investigation into the incident has been reopened after the first one exonerated police.

Former footballer Dalian Atkinson died after a clash with officers in which a Taser was used in Telford in August this year.

A criminal investigation is underway and it is yet to be determined what the cause of death is and whether the Taser played any part.

The US company that produces the device says it is wrong to describe the weapon as non-lethal, preferring instead the label "less lethal".

The Police Federation wants any officer who requests a Taser to be given it.

TROUBLEMAKER MAKES few recommendations for seasonal gifts. However sometimes a real bargain comes along. Advertised as "gift for Dad" and "gift for wife", the Theresa May Toby Jug Yellow Colourway is a snip at £24.95.

Though why the Nigel Farage one is more than three times the price at £89 is unclear.



A MAN who stabbed another man because he had sex with his girlfriend was only sentenced to eight months in prison because the woman "wound him up".

Jamie Carlton stabbed John Scott in the back in Merseyside and admitted wounding. The judge said that Carlton had "encountered considerable provocation".

Bailed out bank gets ready to slash jobs

ROYAL BANK of Scotland is set to unleash yet more job cuts after being ordered to find £2 billion to boost its finances.

The bank, saved by us after the 2008 financial meltdown, admitted "further decreasing its cost base" and selling non-vital parts of the business were needed to hit the target.

The confession came after it failed Bank of England tests to see if it could withstand another 2008-style crisis.

More than 40,000 workers have lost their jobs since the bank was bailed out by the government.

Rivals Barclays

and Standard Chartered also struggled to pass the yearly health check.

The government still owns a 73 percent stake in RBS.

HM Revenue & Customs has been slammed for its "scandalous" hiring of a US contractor to cut tax credits.

MPs say Concentrix took a "guilty until proven innocent" approach to claimants—and had a "cut first, think later" approach. Some 90 percent of appeals on decisions were upheld.

Nuttall denies making up his CV and PhD

NEW UKIP leader Paul Nuttall denied claims that he doctored his online CV and backed privatisation of the NHS.

Nuttall distanced himself from a LinkedIn page which said he had a doctorate from Liverpool Hope University and played professional football for Tranmere Rovers.

He blamed an "over-enthusiastic researcher".

He told the BBC that he had played for Tranmere's youth team and had

studied for a doctorate. "I've never claimed I've got a PhD."

"It's on a LinkedIn page that wasn't put up by us," he said.

Nuttall played down comments he made before becoming leader calling for the NHS to be privatised.

He said, "Some point in this century, years on, we may well have to have

a debate on how we fund the NHS."

He didn't deny being a dangerous racist—which is odd 'cause he is.

Paul Nuttall

Police phone robbers get round security

STREET THEFT of phones is a rising problem.

And the latest perpetrators are the cops.

Detectives have developed a new tactic to beat criminals using mobile phone encryption—legally robbing them.

Officers seize the phone in the street while the suspect is on a call.

This gets around the problem of having to know the security settings.

Detectives from Operation Falcon dreamt up the "street seizure of the phone" tactic.

This is the specialist Metropolitan Police team running investigations into major fraud and related crimes organised online.

And of course they will only use the tactic for major fraud cases.

FIGURE IT OUT

£5.5 trillion household debt in Britain

£66 million owed on credit cards in Britain

£30,000 average debt per person

£3,743 on credit cards each

Tory childcare costs don't really add up

THE TORIES have made much of their promises to provide free childcare.

But the plan could be hit by a £100 million funding shortage.

The government has set aside £50 million for councils to build nursery schools.

So far £55 million has been asked for by just over a third of councils, Freedom of Information requests show.

When all 152 have made their bids they could exceed £150 million.

That means there may not be enough places to meet a pledge of 30 hours a week for all three and four year olds from next September.

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NHS needs a movement to stop Tories' cutbacks

by TOMÁŠ TENGEY-EVANS

THE FIGHT against Tory plans to axe hundreds of hospital departments and services is gaining momentum.

Up to 600 people joined a meeting in Hammersmith Town Hall in west London last Tuesday night. It was organised by Labour-run Hammersmith and Fulham Council against new plans that would force the closure of Charing Cross and Ealing hospitals.

Eve Turner, chair of the Save Ealing Hospital Campaign, told Socialist Worker, "We have been in the firing line in Ealing. We were the forerunner for a lot of the changes being pushed through in the NHS and now they're coming for more."

Under the "Shaping a Healthier Future" plan, the accident and emergency (A&E) units at Central Middlesex and Hammersmith hospitals shut in 2014.

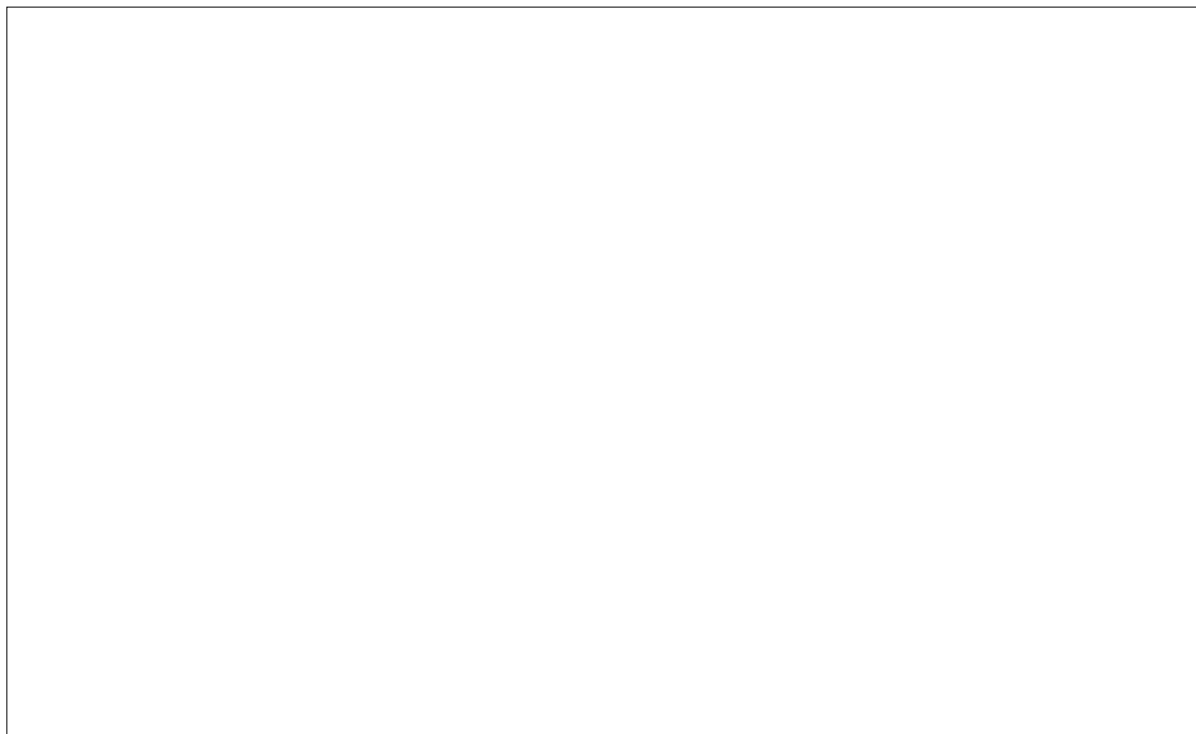
The Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) have repackaged this programme and threaten more brutal cuts. In north west London this means slashing the number of hospitals from nine to five.

Acute

Eve said, "We now face losing what's left of A&E services—and when an A&E closes, the hospital's acute beds also go."

The Tories claim "centralising" services will improve patient care. While some procedures are best done in large hubs, the plans are about wholesale cuts to services. As Eve said, "They've said all along that it's about clinical outcome, but we know it's about cutting services."

Bosses at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust have said that Charing Cross Hospital's A&E will be "safe"—but only until 2021. If successfully pushed through, the STP



ACTIVISTS HAVE fought for years to defend the NHS in west London

determine if they are migrants.

Eve said, "We've always been clear in our campaign that it's not migrants but the cuts that cause pressure in the NHS."

But the growing opposition to the STPs shows that the Tories' assault on the NHS can be pushed back.

Hammersmith and Fulham and Ealing councils have both refused to sign up to the STPs—a major roadblock to pushing through the attacks.

Eve said, "Having a strong campaign in the area helped the council take that stand and now we've got to support them."

"We've also got to help them stand firm, because there are attempts to bribe councils to sign up to the STPs with promises of more social care funding."

Health Campaigns Together has called a national demonstration in defence of the NHS for 4 March, which the Unite union is backing. Labour and other unions should back it too.

Eve said, "We'll be pressuring the two councils to support the demonstration."

"There's been a real mushrooming of groups fighting the STPs—that's given us a boost and having a movement means that we're not isolated."

Join a Howl of Protest on 23 December from 12 noon to 2pm on Whitehall in central London. Go to bit.ly/2gZ3GTb

What's your story?
Email with your ideas
reports@socialistworker.co.uk



>>>from page one

as London and Leicester declared themselves at "full capacity". And by Saturday night doctors reported that there were no available beds throughout England.

Tony O'Sullivan worked as a paediatrician in Lewisham, south east London. He is the co-chair of Keep Our NHS Public.

"The risks multiply all the time with delay," he told Socialist Worker. "They are putting children, the most vulnerable, at risk."

"Nothing shows more clearly what contempt the government has for the NHS."

Scandal

This latest scandal is the result of years of underfunding. As Tony said, "There is pressure at all levels of the service."

Tony explained how this affected paediatric care.

"The NHS centralised intensive care beds in smaller centres, but there are not enough to cope," he said.

As winter deepens, the NHS crisis will only intensify, warned Tony. "If the NHS is running on a knife edge, all you need are winter conditions to tip it over the edge," he said.

The STPs will be finalised on 23 December and will only make this situation worse. Tony said, "By undermining district general hospitals the STPs will reduce access to prompt, safe hospital care."

Critical

"It will lead to later presentation of ill children, women in labour with complications and the elderly—and will endanger people in the 95 per cent of cases where prompt local care is critical".

He added, "The cover story for STPs—care closer to home in the community—will in reality be less safe care in both community and your local hospital."

Only a revolt against the STPs and a fight for a massive injection of funds into public healthcare will stop children and other patients' lives being put at risk.

Fighting racism and the assault on the NHS can unite millions against the Tories.

Fighting STPs?

Tell us about your campaign
reports@socialistworker.co.uk

SOCIALIST WORKER APPEAL TO RAISE £125,000

The racist Casey review of "social integration" came out this week and bigots everywhere will use it to stoke up prejudice.

We are proud to be the antidote to all that – and to all the vicious lies that will be pumped out in its wake by

large sections of the media.

But we also carry an argument for the alternative – for workers to get organised and fight back together.

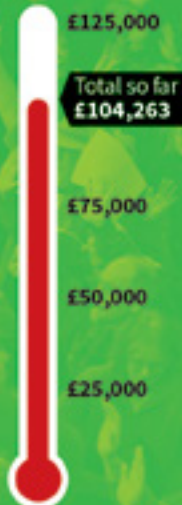
We have now raised £104,263 towards our appeal. We are keen to close in on our £125,000 target before the

end of the year as 2017 will be full of challenges and we want to make sure we have the resources to respond.

We are asking you to dig deep and give what you can afford to help keep your revolutionary newspaper fighting.

To donate go to www.socialistworker.co.uk/appeal

Call 020 7940 5620 or send a cheque, payable to 'SW Appeal' to PO Box 71327, London SE11 9BW





Anti-fascist movement stops Nazis election win

Nazi Norbert Hofer failed to win in a re-run of the Austrian presidential election, writes Sadie Robinson

ANTI-FASCISTS IN Austria were celebrating after Nazi Norbert Hofer lost the presidential election last Sunday.

But the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) candidate still won over 46 percent of the vote.

The election was a re-run of a presidential election in May, where Hofer had taken 49.65 percent of the vote.

This time Green Party candidate Alexander van der Bellen won with over 53 percent of the vote.

The revolutionary socialist organisation Neue Linkswende in Austria had campaigned using posters reading, “No Nazis in the Hofburg”, which is the presidential residence.

Posters

One of its leading members David Albrich told Socialist Worker, “The anti-fascist movement played a big part in this—these posters were all over the media.

“Labelling Hofer a Nazi helped to get people to vote against him.

“Hofer complained several times that he was being accused of being a Nazi.”

Austria’s ruling coalition parties are in deep crisis. In the first round of the presidential election in April, both the conservative People’s Party and the Labour-type social

BACK STORY

Nazi Norbert Hofer did not win the re-run of the Austrian presidential election last Sunday

● In the original election in April he received 49.65 percent of the vote

● But Hofer still received 46 percent of the vote this time round

● The anti-fascist movement played a big part in his defeat

● Calling him out as a Nazi convinced many people to vote against him

democrats won just 22 percent of the vote.

The government’s increasing use of racism is one reason why many anti-fascists expected Hofer to win.

“The coalition parties are moving further to the right every week, which strengthens the FPÖ,” said David.

But anti-racist campaigning made a big difference. As David explained, “We looked at 20 small towns and communities where there was a lot of anti-racist activity.

“Across Austria Van der Bellen gained 1.3 percent compared to May, but in the 20 towns the figure



AN ANTI-FASCIST demonstration before the election

PICTURE: NEUE LINKSWENDE

was 3.2 percent up. This is a sign that when you actively confront racism it strengthens our side.”

Activists across Austria have campaigned against deportations of refugees.

Some have physically fought police to stop deportations, while others have held vigils and set up petitions to defend refugees.

Hofer’s backtracking over the European Union (EU) may have also lost him votes.

David said, “He was again and again saying he doesn’t want to leave the EU, but wants to reform it.

“In exit polls in May, 68 percent

of people said Hofer understood their worries about the future, but this time it fell to 55 percent.

“He could not mobilise the anger against the system and the establishment as he hoped.”

Threat

Hofer’s defeat is a testament to anti-fascist and anti-racist activists in Austria—but the threat hasn’t gone away.

Polls suggest that the FPÖ would be the strongest party in any new elections and would take between 30 and 35 percent of the vote.

David said, “It’s awful that nearly

half of voters gave their vote to a fascist.

“The problem is they don’t know he’s a fascist because he’s hiding his true intentions.”

He added, “We are mobilising against the FPÖ’s annual ball. I think it will be a kind of celebration this time.

“We are also building towards the anti-racist day on 18 March—this will be our most important date.”

On other pages...

Remembering Rock Against Racism >> Pages 10&11

Freedom Party—Nazi to core

THE Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) is Nazi to the core.

Its first leader was former Nazi minister and SS officer Anton Reinthaller.

But the main parties consistently reached out to it.

In 1983 the Labour-type SPÖ even invited it to join a coalition government.

Again in 1999 the Tory VPO invited it to

a crisis for the FPÖ.

But since 2008 it has gained from resentment at the ruling Labour/Tory coalition and the EU.

The coalition has also pandered to its racism.

But the party’s rise shows that making concessions to its deeply reactionary agenda will not

defeat it—only mass opposition will.

Nazi Norbert Hofer

form a coalition. But this coalition provoked mass protests, causing

ITALY

Italian prime minister Matteo Renzi

Referendum revolt fells Italian prime minsiter

by SIMON BASKETTER

ITALIAN PRIME minister Matteo Renzi announced his resignation after suffering defeat in a referendum on constitutional reforms last Sunday.

With a larger than expected turnout of 68 percent, Renzi’s proposed amendments were rejected by 59 to 41 percent.

His proposals would have strengthened the prime minister’s powers.

A Yes vote would have turned the Italian Senate, parliament’s upper house, into an unelected body stripped of its powers to bring down the prime minister.

The chamber of deputies, the lower house, could then have named a prime minister, ruling without any meaningful opposition in parliament.

The result reflected opposition to Renzi’s ruling Democratic Party (PD) and European Union (EU) imposed austerity (see below).

His PD came to office in 2013 after people rejected austerity.

But Matteo continued with austerity at a slower pace.

European leaders presented the referendum as a last chance for the EU to address Italy’s banking crisis.

German finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble warned, “Italy urgently needs a government that is able to act and I hope that they resume the reform course.” In other words, keep up the austerity.

Italian president Sergio Mattarella will now try and get a new government formed. While the PD has a majority, it was itself split over the referendum.

Before new elections are held—possibly next spring—a new administration will be tasked with writing up a new electoral law.

The rules drawn up by Renzi only apply to the lower house—they were convinced that the referendum would annul the senate.

Renzi made bold promises to shake up Italy—but the self-styled “Demolition Man” failed.

Italian right aren’t winners

THE ITALIAN right made much of the running against Matteo Renzi’s government—and gained most of the publicity in British press.

The populist Five Star Movement campaigns over corruption but has demanded more clampdowns on migrants.

The hard right Northern League and Silvio Berlusconi’s Forza Italia used the campaign to build support.

But the vote was far from a show of support for the right—and young people were mostly for No.

According to one exit poll, 18-34 year olds opted for No by 81 percent and 35-54 year olds by 67 percent.

Only voters aged 55 and over went for Yes with 53 percent.

Those campaigning for a No vote included former ministers from the

centre of Italian politics—and some of Renzi’s own party.

There have also been repeated strikes and protests against Renzi and the EU’s austerity programme.

The left and the unions also supported a No vote. The large CGIL trade union federation moved to support action against the referendum last month.

A slightly panicked Financial Times newspaper reporter interviewed Alfredo, a 68 year old communist voter at a polling booth on the Via Pannonia in Rome. “I don’t like the Renzi government,” he told them after casting his No vote.

“I don’t like the way Italy is subordinated to Europe. I am in favour of Europe but I want a Europe of the people.”

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

BRITAIN IS SEGREGATED—BETWEEN RICH AND POOR

RACISTS HAVE seized on a new report on segregation in Britain. Written by government “integration tsar” Louise Casey, it claimed that some areas where Muslims live are becoming more segregated (see page 6).

The Daily Mail newspaper leapt on its claims with glee. “What a strange thing it is to stand in a street in Britain asking someone if they know of a white family living in the neighbourhood,” one article began.

“This is liberal, multicultural Britain, not apartheid South Africa.”

The Mail also got a Muslim to write for good measure. “At long last, a senior government official has had the gumption to warn about the devastating effect of mass immigration,” he began.

In reality, politicians constantly scaremonger over immigration and Muslims in particular.

They claim that Muslims live in a “parallel world”. This encourages the idea that Muslims are different and dangerous, but it can be dressed up in rhetoric that sounds progressive.

So former prime minister

David Cameron made much of his desire to help Muslim women, who he called “traditionally submissive”. He painted them as stuck at home at the mercy of domineering husbands, unable to speak English.

To be fair, he probably doesn’t know many Muslim women, being part of the segregated Eton-educated millionaire section of society.

Other right wingers talk of arranged marriages and female genital mutilation to encourage Islamophobia. For instance, Casey talked of religious practices that “run contrary to British values”.

It is laughable for Western rulers to pose as enlightened—we

live in a deeply oppressive society. But our rulers demonise Muslims because they want to divide us.

Casey’s report, like others, defines areas as segregated where the white population has fallen.

Where segregation does exist, it’s down to racism.

Racism means that migrants are often concentrated in poor, rundown areas. Racist policies have housed Asians on certain streets and whites on others.

And racism in society means that some Asian families may prefer to live near others.

But our rulers talk much less about the real segregation in society—that of class.

The rich are the most segregated section. They live in a different world to the rest of us and work hard to keep it that way.

Working class oiks are kept out of their elite schools. Ordinary families can’t afford to live in wealthy areas. And private health care keeps the rich well away from ordinary people using an underfunded NHS.

Official figures show that ordinary people are becoming more integrated, not less.

But that won’t stop those who want to use racism to divide us.

“**The rich are the most segregated section of society. They live a world apart from us**”

REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

IN TOUGH times, it’s important to celebrate when our side wins.

In Italy, Austria and the US, ordinary people recorded heartening victories this week.

At Standing Rock, Sioux Native Americans beat back the US state (page 17).

In Austria the Nazi presidential candidate Norbert Hofer was defeated.

In Italy, people mobilised to stop democratic rights being stripped away.

Trump’s election in the US and the Brexit vote have been held up by some as evidence of an international rightward shift.

Certainly there have been some real reverses—and towering challenges exist.

But recent days underline that we can and must organise against racism and austerity.

The mood exists in Britain to fight back against the attacks that are levelled against us—and the racism used to justify them.

The resistance of Durham

teaching assistants is a glimpse of what we need—although it has also shown the limitations imposed by the union leaders.

At times of crisis, the political situation can be pulled to the left or the right.

That means the left needs to be organised—and where it is, it can win big.

To shape the outcome of a society in turmoil we need united campaigns—against racism, the destruction of the NHS and more. We also need socialist politics.

Stand Up To Racism Activists’ Diary

● **Saturday 10 December**

Winter Appeal for Refugees, including a delegation to Calais

● **Friday 20 January**

Protests across Britain as Donald Trump is inaugurated US president

● **Saturday 4 February**

Stand Up To Racism trade union conference

● **Saturday 18 March**

National demonstrations against racism in London and Glasgow



standuptoracism.org.uk



'Refugees in—Freedom Party out' banner

ANALYSIS
NICK CLARK

Labour must choose a side on migrants

HOW MUCH longer can the Labour Party keep disagreeing with itself about immigration? Pressure on the party—and the tensions inside it—over immigration are growing.

Paul Nuttall's election as leader of the racist Ukip party last week encouraged those in Labour who want the party to promise more immigration controls.

In his victory speech Nuttall said he wanted to “replace the Labour Party and make Ukip the patriotic voice of working people”. He said Labour had “ceased to speak the language or address the issues of working people”—by which he meant immigration.

Nuttall described Labour as an “open goal” for Ukip—although recent council by-election results show that Ukip is taking support from the Tories, not Labour.

Yet many in Labour are convinced that showing they are in touch with the working class means echoing Ukip's racism.

So on the day of Nuttall's victory, Labour MP Stephen Kinnock declared that Labour had to “move away from multiculturalism and towards assimilation”. “We must stand for one group—the British people,” he said.

Kinnock also said Labour was losing the support of white working class people because it had been too busy “obsessing about diversity”.

It was an argument that seemed drastically at odds with the one made by Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn last Saturday.

Corbyn was speaking to a collection of European Labour-type parties in Prague in the Czech Republic. He said countering the rise of the far right meant the left had to build its own radical alternative to “the failed politics of the past”.

He insisted, “We cannot abandon our socialist principles because we are told this is the only way to win power.”

“It is vital that our rhetoric cannot be used to legitimise the scapegoating of refugees or migrant workers.”

But prominent Labour politicians—including some from Labour's front bench—have been doing just that.

Restrict

Labour's shadow Brexit minister Keir Starmer said last Sunday that Labour should restrict free movement of workers. And former shadow chancellor turned celebrity dancer Ed Balls said it would be “catastrophic” for Labour to demand freedom of movement after Brexit.

Labour MP Dan Jarvis told the BBC's Sunday Politics programme that a Labour government should set a target for capping immigration.

Sadly many on the left of Labour have given way to the pressure to pander to anti-migrant racism and have fallen in behind the right.

On the same Sunday Politics programme shadow home secretary Diane Abbott rightly spoke out against the targets that Jarvis, Starmer and Kinnock want. She said that ending free movement had “become a synonym for anti-immigrant racism”.

But she also said Labour should instead look at “the underlying economic issues which bring migrants to our shores” as a way of bringing migration down.

Some on the left, such as Guardian newspaper columnist Owen Jones, have gone much further.

Jones—who has recently been giving talks on “The Politics of Hope”—argued last week that it is impossible to challenge racist ideas.

Instead Labour needs “a programme, and a language” that “chimes with the concerns” about immigration—regardless of what the facts about immigration are.

Tellingly, Jones doesn't spell out what such a “programme and language” would look and sound like. But his reasoning underlined the fear about losing votes to Ukip—and the pessimism about building an anti-racist alternative—that fuel the left's backsliding.

That backsliding is quickly becoming an avalanche.

Up until now, Labour has tried to be the party that defends migrants against racists, and the party that listens to racist “concerns” about immigration.

It can't do this forever.

The tension between the two positions means the pressure on Labour to choose between one and the other is growing.

It's up to the left to resist the pressure to pander to Ukip's racism—not collapse into it.

Yarl's Wood detainees speak out during demonstration

A big protest in defence of refugees made links with detainees locked up at Yarl's Wood, reports Freya Blake

OVER 2,000 protesters staged a mass demonstration against Yarl's Wood in Bedfordshire last Saturday. It is one of Britain's largest immigration detention centres.

The protest was electric. After walking a mile or two from the road where we got off the coaches, we surrounded the detention centre.

The most notable chant of the day was, “Shut it down, shut it down”.

Looking up, we could see windows open and arms hanging out, waving in support of our demonstration and holding up signs and messages.

There were thousands of us kicking the iron walls that surround the building. We were chanting, there were drums and people were dancing.

We had moments of silence, moments of rage and moments of listening to the stories of women who have been released from Yarl's Wood.

Broadcast

Some of the organisers from Movement for Justice set up a sound system and managed to call and broadcast the voices of some of the women inside.

They communicated their gratitude for the demonstration. One woman said, “We are not criminals.”

“We are law abiding



SOME PROTESTERS lit flares during the protest at Yarl's Wood

PICTURES: FREYA BLAKE



citizens, but we have been locked up, far away from the real world just for existing.”

Another woman told protesters that their detention is a human rights infringement.

She spoke of the “injustice” that detainees suffer daily at the hands of the police.

Some protesters lit flares, others spraypainted “Set her free” on the fences that separated us from those detained.

Many of us hung up our signs on the fencing opposite the centre, so that our messages could be read by the women inside.

One of those women is Diane Ngoza, a Ghanaian refugee from Manchester. A broad range of campaigns in the city are fighting attempts to deport her.

Several women were held in isolation in Yarl's Wood last month amid fears of a tuberculosis outbreak. One detainee was hospitalised.

One of those quarantined was a young woman from Kenya.

She said, “I'm angry, to be honest. The staff have been speculating for weeks my friend could have TB—we asked to be tested and we

were turned down.

“I don't feel safe. So many people are coughing and ill—why isn't everyone being tested?”

Three detention officers are on bail over allegations of rape, abuse and misconduct at Yarl's Wood. It follows previous sexual and racist abuse uncovered by Channel 4 journalists.

Freedom of Information figures last month revealed that 218 hunger strikes took place in detention in the three months to September.

The barbaric jailing of refugees must be abolished.

Got a story?
Email ideas to reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Casey's report will whip up racism

A NEW report sparked headlines that migrants are not “integrating” into British society.

Government integration tsar Louise Casey's report actually said that segregation is falling in Britain.

But it claimed that some areas and groups have become more segregated.

The report is a thinly veiled Islamophobic attack. Casey paints women's oppression as a Muslim issue.

She claims that “far too many women” are suffering “misogyny and



domestic abuse” in some predominantly Muslim areas.

The report talks of “deeply regressive cultural practices” that hold women back.

The report appears to blame the government for the “segregation”. But its recommendations are yet another attack on migrants and Muslims.

Casey recommends that migrants take an “integration oath” and wants them to embrace “British values”.

Is Britain becoming more segregated? bit.ly/2h5PzYx

FIGURE IT OUT

9 percent of people living as part of a couple were in an inter-ethnic relationship in England and Wales in 2011

7 percent was the figure for the same measure in 2001

4 percent of white British people were in an inter-ethnic relationship—the lowest of all ethnic groups

Fear of foul play raised at Glasgow City Council

Evidence of illegal strike-breaking has emerged amid an IT workers' walkout, reports Raymie Kiernan

IS LABOUR-RUN Glasgow City Council organising to break a strike of 39 specialist IT workers illegally? This is the question on the lips of Unison union strikers.

They have found that IT recruitment agencies have advertised jobs accurately matching theirs, in Glasgow city centre, for the two-month duration of their strike.

The 39 workers at Access—a council joint venture with outsourcing giant Serco that runs the authority's IT service—are on a three-week walkout.

Unison convenor Tony Santilli told Socialist Worker that the strike is going "very well".

The dispute centres on the £400 million proposed privatisation of Glasgow IT services by Labour Party councillors. They are pushing a deal with the Canadian multinational CGI Group.

But Tony said workers "want the IT service to remain in-house and not be privatised".

The Unison convenor said the union was alerted to the strike-busters' plot when strikers received recruitment adverts for their jobs from agencies they were registered with.

Panic erupted in the council chief executive's office last Thursday as workers began their walkout.

Just 39 workers "could have a severe impact on our ability to deliver our services" during their strike from 1 to 22 December, chief executive Annemarie O'Donnell told council staff in an email.

Panicking

O'Donnell is panicking because the strikers "work in highly technical fields that support the council's business critical applications".

"Because of the specialist roles they perform, there is very limited ability to move other members of staff to cover for them," she said.

For job adverts to appear as the chief executive makes this statement is very fishy.

The workers' action will be suspended for the Christmas

BACK STORY

Glasgow city council has been waging a war against workers

● Over the past year the Labour-led authority has fought with CCTV workers, IT workers and janitors

● IT workers in the city are currently on strike over proposed privatisation until 22 December

● Labour in Glasgow faces annihilation at next year's council elections, with the SNP looking likely to do well

● Read more at bit.ly/2gYOVzY

holidays and resume again from 5 to 27 January. The union is also considering further action.

Glasgow Scottish National Party (SNP) MP Chris Stephens has lodged an early day motion at Westminster. It demands that the council "desist from hiring agency workers to replace their own workforce on strike".

Proposal

SNP councillors, and the Greens, are opposed to the Labour privatisation plan. Yet the proposal still has not gone to a full council meeting.

Labour will not be keen on having a full vote for fear that any of its councillors rebel.

It is digging a bigger grave for itself at the council elections in May.

But the SNP's hands are not clean. It cut a joint decision with Labour in Edinburgh to hand a seven-year £190 million deal to CGI. And its Scottish government contract with the firm has been disastrous.

Workers can rely only on their own action to defeat the privatisation plan—not politicians eager to please in return for votes in May.

Unison members planned to lobby the council's scrutiny committee meeting on Thursday, 1pm, at Glasgow City Chambers. Send messages of solidarity to enquiries@glasgowcityunison.co.uk



LABOUR SHADOW home secretary Diane Abbott joins a CWU union picket line

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Post Office workers strike to stop job losses—and could launch Xmas action

POST OFFICE workers struck across Britain last Saturday—one of the busiest days of the year—in a fight against privatisation and job losses.

The CWU union members walked out for the third time this year to stop bosses closing some 100 crown post offices and outsourcing them.

The CWU said it could escalate its action ahead of Christmas if bosses don't back down.

Joan, who works as a counter at a post office in east London, said that the strike was vital to stop the job losses that outsourcing would bring.

Worried

She told Socialist Worker, "We're all worried about our jobs. A lot of people can't afford to strike, but we've got to do it. It's got to be done."

She added that cuts to the service had already meant large numbers of job losses.

"There used to be twelve counters in this office," she explained. "Now there are six."

CWU deputy general secretary Andy Furey said the privatisation plans wouldn't just be bad news

for current workers. It would mean worse jobs in the future.

He told Socialist Worker, "If this is franchised and put in the back of a convenience store or a newsagents our members will lose their jobs."

"They'll be replaced by younger people who are being exploited on the minimum wage."

"So everybody loses out. Lower paid jobs, the community suffers because of the worse quality of service, and our members lose their jobs."

Bosses also want to replace workers' defined benefit pension scheme with a worse defined contribution scheme.

The changes would mean some post office workers could get thousands of pounds less when they retire—even though the scheme is in surplus.

Joan said, "I don't understand why they want to close the scheme when they're not losing out on it. It's all about cuts, cuts, cuts."

Managers in the Unite union, who are fighting the pension changes alongside CWU members, also struck.

Post Office bosses said the service was "business as usual"

despite the strike. But Joan's office was forced to close, and she said any that had stayed open were struggling.

"Right across the country there are post offices that are closed," she said. "And the ones that are open have people who don't know how to do the transactions."

Joan also said that strikers had support on the picket line from trade unionists and passers-by.

And Labour MPs joined some picket lines.

Refused

Yet despite the strikes, Post Office bosses have refused to make any concessions. Now the CWU has said it could escalate beyond one-day strikes in the run-up to Christmas.

"We want to stop the rot of the managed decline of the Post Office," Furey told Socialist Worker.

"In terms of future strikes our postal executive committee is meeting on Tuesday. I will be proposing an escalation."

"We will be looking to take further action—beyond the single days—in the busy lead up to Christmas."

Mass demos could end president's life of plenty

Protests demanding South Korea's president resigns are deepening, writes **Workers' Solidarity**

THE BIGGEST popular mobilisation in South Korean history brought the country to a standstill last Saturday.

Around 1.7 million people took to the streets in the capital Seoul alone. A further 200,000 protested in Busan, the traditional heartland of the ruling Saenuri party.

Rail, metal and public sector workers' unions mobilised in large numbers.

This growing movement forced president Park Geun-hye to announce that MPs would decide her fate last week. It was a dirty tactic to avoid impeachment by appeasing rebel MPs within her own party.

The rebel MPs soon declared they will not vote for impeachment.

This immediately divided the opposition parties. One of them argued that it didn't have enough MPs to push through the impeachment.

Impeached

But Saturday's protests forced the rebel MPs within the ruling party to flip again.

Now it is more likely that Park will be impeached on Friday of this week, but the constitutional court will need to ratify the decision.

That may take up to six months, which leaves plenty of room for political uncertainty.

But the demand for immediate resignation has been taken up across the working class movement.

For weeks the opposition parties have been distancing themselves from the movement, relying on negotiations with the ruling party.

Only a fierce backlash from protesters moved them to impeach the president—but they backed down after Park's announcement.

But the left wing KCTU trade union federation's one-day protest strike last Wednesday acted as bridge to the mass demonstration.

Many ordinary people were outraged to see Park refuse to step down. They also criticised the opposition parties for their opportunistic

BACK STORY

Protests rocked South Korea after revelations about president Park Geun-hye's political adviser

- Adviser Choi Soon-sil has meddled with all aspects of government from university admissions to top appointments

- Corruption has been exposed between the government and top corporations

- Samsung is alleged to have donated millions to organisations run by Choi Soon-sil

- The protests have been the largest in the country's history

behaviour.

As a result, last Saturday's protest had a more ferocious atmosphere than previous ones. Many shouted, "Arrest Park Geun-hye," along with, "Step down immediately."

One retail worker said, "I work from 7am and now my back is aching terribly."

"Yet I couldn't help coming to this protest after seeing Park's announcement. They are monsters."

Strike

On Saturday many trade unions put forward demands about wages and working conditions.

Rail workers have been on strike for more than two months. Shipbuilding workers face large-scale "restructuring" due to the crisis. Migrant workers are suffering discrimination.

They all brought their demands onto the protests.

Protesters also demanded the arrest of Samsung and Hyundai Motors' bosses for bribery. They had insisted in front of a parliamentary hearing that they did not bribe Park.

But people do not trust them and will not stop protesting until they are held to account.

Workers' Solidarity is Socialist Worker's sister publication.

For a gallery of photos go to socialistworker.co.uk



A SMALL section of the 1.7 million-strong protest in the capital Seoul

PICTURE: WORKERS' SOLIDARITY

Movement exposes political fault lines

MANY FORCES within the movement acknowledge that workers have played an important role.

Workers have launched political strikes against the government and have been the backbone of the street protests.

However, organised workers do not lead the movement because their union leaders are holding them back.

And the right wing forces within the movement—NGOs and the Stalinists—are constantly attempting to limit the movement to supporting parliamentary activities.

They are doing everything they can to push the left wing trade unions and the radical

left to the margins of the movement.

One of their arguments is that protests should take place in front of parliament, instead of their current site near the presidential residence.

This reflects the right wing of the movement's intention to transform people's direct action against the president into support for MPs in parliament.

For weeks, the police have been forced little by little to allow protesters to come within 100 metres of the presidential residence.

To argue that we need to pull back and instead head towards parliament, more than six miles away, is ridiculous.



Workers' Solidarity sold 8,000 papers on Saturday's protest

Gearing up for a general strike in Greece

A GENERAL strike of public and private sector workers was set to take place in Greece on Thursday.

It will follow a public sector general strike last month and rolling sectoral strikes.

Seafarers struck last week against the removal of tax breaks which could see workers pay up to 55 percent of their wages in tax.

The members of the Pan-Hellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO) struck for 48 hours and will be joining Thursday's general strike. "They have been on strike since last Friday," said Panos

Garganas, editor of Socialist Worker's sister newspaper in Greece. "Not a single boat has moved."

The movement against the Syriza government's and the EU's brutal austerity is growing after the conditions for the latest tranche of debt relief were made public.

Greece's creditors are demanding the removal of restrictions on mass sackings, and are undermining the right to strike and collective bargaining. On top of this they want further cuts to

pensions which have already been slashed.

Panos described how workers are preparing for the general strike. "Media workers will be on strike the day before so they can cover the general strike rallies," he said.

"Meanwhile, the Troika is in a mess after the Italian referendum. Now is the time to put an end to austerity through workers' action."

Use Tory weakness on housing

I WELCOME the public meeting called by the GMB union and Islington council urging Islington tenants to oppose the Housing and Planning Act.

This follows the national Axe the Housing Act campaign which has seen the growth of local groups including Islington Axe the Housing Act (IATHA).

Last year IATHA initiated a 600-strong public meeting in Islington town hall. We have also been active in the campaign to redevelop the site of Holloway prison.

Last month a public meeting discussed the future for the site. Eileen Short from the national campaign spoke of the significant gains that the movement has made.

These include scrapping “pay to stay” and delaying the right to buy of housing association tenants.

She warned of the risk of thousands of social rented homes being lost.

Also on the platform was Jeremy Corbyn. Imagine any other mainstream political party leader attending and supporting these campaigns—no, me neither.

We have a serious fight on our hands to ensure that piece of land is used to build social housing and local services. Many of those women coming out of prison need the security of a home for their family.

The backtracking on the act is a sign of the deep splits in the Tory party and is also testament to campaigners’ resistance.

Morag Gillie
North London



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Parents value the Durham TAs—even if bosses do not

DURHAM COUNTY Council has left itself open to the “threat of equal pay claim” from other employees—but our teaching assistants (TAs) are paying the price.

These TAs have been hired on certain contracts and have taken up employment based on the content in them.

Now the council wants to change the contracts and expects the TAs to accept them. This is ludicrous.

TAs are a unique bunch. They have a range of duties from paint pot washing to looking after children with complex medical needs.

They can be called upon to carry

out life-saving procedures.

Who else’s job has such a wide range of responsibility?

Shouldn’t we be embracing these people rather than demeaning them?

Please be assured that parents value the job they do even if their employers don’t.

The TAs have struck against the changes and are now working to rule.

While schools remain open, whole classes are being excluded as the work TAs do as a goodwill gesture is rightfully withdrawn.

For example, TAs would normally cover whole classes so that teachers are free to do planning.

This current situation is having a huge impact on our children’s education.

It clearly demonstrates that we rely on the TAs to run schools efficiently.

But if these wage-cutting proposals go ahead it is going to have a massive impact on children’s education in the long term.

The TAs—who have a wealth of knowledge, experience and passion—will be forced to leave the profession that they love.

As parents we need to back the TAs. We should put pressure on the council before we lose this group of people forever.

Beverley Affleck
Consett

‘People’s cabinet’ is stuffed with super rich

PEOPLE OFTEN say that the British government has a “cabinet of millionaires”.

But that description does not really fit with Donald Trump’s new cabinet.

So far it includes several multi-millionaires, and several billionaires.

The billionaires are Trump himself, possible commerce secretary Wilbur Ross, and Betsy DeVos, the nominee for education secretary.

Then there are the multi-millionaires Steven Mnuchin, Tom Price, Ben

Carson and Jeff Sessions—each “worth” between £6 million and £40 million.

The rest of the potential cabinet are all mere millionaires.

Such extraordinary wealth makes a mockery of the idea that Trump’s administration will in any way represent ordinary people.

Far from “anti-elitist”, the Trump team will be firmly wired into corporate interests.

Alun Williams
Cardiff

Castro helped fight colonialism in Africa

SOCIALISTS ACROSS the globe mourn the death of communist leader and former Cuban president Fidel Castro.

Fidel played an important role to set free the African continent and Caribbean.

We will always admire him for taking over power in the 1959 revolution and putting together a cabinet of moderates.

But it did not last long.

As the first waves of Cuban exiles arrived in Miami and northern New Jersey after the revolution many were intent on



Fidel Castro

overthrowing the man they had once supported.

The Central Intelligence Agency helped train an exile army to take Cuba back to an autocratic leader by force.

Although Fidel pursued

ideologically communist policies, he never established a purely Communist state in Cuba.

He centralised the economy and flattened out much of the traditional hierarchy of Cuban society, improving education and healthcare for many Cubans.

He exported thousands of Cuban soldiers to Africa to fight against the colonialists of Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia in support of Communist insurgents.

Thabang Maseko
EC Young Communist League SA

Just a thought...

I’m still the enemy within

SOME COMRADES will know I’ve been through a difficult time. I’m currently in hospital after having brain surgery.

I want to send a message of solidarity and thanks to everyone who’s given me support over the past weeks.

I’m still here—still fighting—still the enemy within.

Steve Hammill
ex miner, Crewe

Real reason for sanctions

THE Department for Work and Pensions admitted last week it does not track the costs and benefits of benefit sanctions.

The real reason for them is to intimidate claimants—and warn workers of the fate that awaits them if they lose their job.

Paul Birney
West London

Stop the big rail racket

TRAIN FARES are going to go up yet again next year, this time by an average of 2.3 percent.

But this must be one of the worst times ever for quality of service.

It’s time the government nationalised the railways and got rid of the fat cats.

Siobhan Miller
Swansea

Should drink cost us more?

WOULD Socialist Worker support minimum pricing for alcohol?

On the one hand, it would of course affect poor people more than rich ones.

But it also might stop poor people drinking themselves to death.

Gail Swinnow
Derby

It’s not all gloomy in US

IT’S BEEN depressing seeing Donald Trump’s election in the US.

But other things—such as the Fight for \$15 campaign—show the other side.

It might not get as much publicity as Trump, but there is still a workers’ fightback going on.

Linda Wren
East London



WHAT SOCIALISTS SAY

The single market is a tool for the bosses

ORDINARY PEOPLE are told that it is in their interests to support the European Single Market. In reality the single market was designed to nurture and protect giant corporations.

Single market rules instruct member states to run market economies with free competition.

The single market opens up all industries for privatisation and rules out nationalisation.

And it cuts costs for the bosses by freeing them to operate more freely across different countries.

It is built on “four freedoms” for the bosses—to move goods, services, workers and capital.

Anything judged to obstruct those freedoms can be taken to the European Court of Justice.

Regulations on food, drink and advertising have been overturned by firms eager to expand.

Construction workers in Sweden struck in 2007 after a Latvian firm refused to sign their collective agreement—meaning it could pay Latvian workers less.

The union was fined for breaching its freedom to provide services.

Bosses running a ship between Finland and Estonia similarly used the court against union resistance. They were moving from a Finnish to an Estonian flag to use weaker labour regulations.

The one positive aspect of the single market is the one its defenders are prepared to sacrifice—the free movement of labour.

This allows nationals from one European Union (EU) country to live and work in another.

Loopholes

But it is full of loopholes that allow governments to deny some EU migrants benefits and public services. And it brutally represses immigration from outside the EU.

Creating a single market was a defining goal of European integration.

It would do on a bigger scale



The single market sought to do on a bigger scale what nation states did to help capitalism

Jacques Delors' promise of a “social Europe” turned out to be hollow

what nation states had done to help capitalism grow. A nation state with uniform laws, taxes and infrastructure meant capitalists faced few barriers in exploiting any opportunity they saw to make profit. This could be combined with restrictions on foreign competitors.

The state ruled to make market forces sovereign. But by the Cold War, competition between national markets in Europe paled before their common rivalry with other power blocs.

Demolishing the protectionist tariffs and regulations that each state used to promote its own capitalists was a big gamble for Europe's rulers.

It took until 1993 to successfully launch the single market. Its rules are still unevenly applied by governments with one eye on their national markets and nationalist politics.

Its principles mirror the TTIP, TPP and Ceta trade deals. These have rightly attracted opposition because they are bids to entrench corporate power.

The single market is seen as more progressive partly because of then-European Commission president Jacques Delors' promise of a “social Europe” in the 1980s.

That promise was hollow.

And backing the single market reflects a deep pessimism that we can't fight for anything better.

Some in the ruling class oppose the EU and the single market because of divisions over what's best for the bosses.

But after eight years of economic crisis, rulers across Europe agree that to restore their profitability they must attack workers' living standards.

They cling to their single market because it is one of their weapons. Workers must take every opportunity to disarm them.



Rock Against Racism (RAR) was formed 40 years ago. A new book, *Reminiscences of RAR*, gives voice to some of those involved. Sadie Robinson looks at some of those voices.

IN LATE 1970s Britain fascists were organising—there was widespread racism and a spate of racist murders. But a mass movement against the Nazis broke their rise.

The Anti Nazi League (ANL) confronted the fascist National Front and other Nazis on the streets. And Rock Against Racism brought together hundreds of thousands of people in a show of defiance and unity.

The movement developed at a frightening time.

Socialist activist Jack Robertson said, “Everywhere you went there were NF stickers and slogans. Encouraged by Enoch Powell's inflammatory “rivers of blood” rhetoric, the Front had started to get big votes. Racist murders were becoming a regular occurrence.”

Activist Bob Light described it as “the worst of times”. “The Nazis created an atmosphere of violence and intimidation,” he said. “1976 was like living in a war zone.”

Roger Huddle, one of the founders of RAR, said, “During 1977 there were open street battles with the NF. A much wider united front was needed and the ANL was launched.”

A group of activists

wrote a letter to the NME magazine following a racist onstage rant by musician Eric Clapton. “We want to organise a rank and file movement against the racist poison in rock music,” it read. “All those interested please write to Rock Against Racism.”

Paul Furness from Leeds said, “When I saw the letter it was like an overdue breath of fresh air—and I knew that something was going to happen.”

“In Leeds we put on the second ever Rock Against Racism gig. And that was it—Leeds RAR was up and running.”

RAR gigs brought together black and white musicians at a time when this was rare. They used

local, lesser known bands, and mixed punk with reggae artists.

RAR tapped into a mood across Britain as people rushed to get involved. And the message was that anyone could set up a RAR group and start organising.

As artist Nina Saunders put it, “RAR was very open, it didn't feel like I needed some special

knowledge to join in.”

Kate Webb helped reply to the letters “flooding in” to RAR. “It was evident that there was a nation of kids out there, bored out of their minds, and horrified by the National Front,” she said.

“There was massive energy and frustration, which RAR

planning a march from Trafalgar Square to Victoria Park. I told my parents I wanted to go on the march. No way, they said.

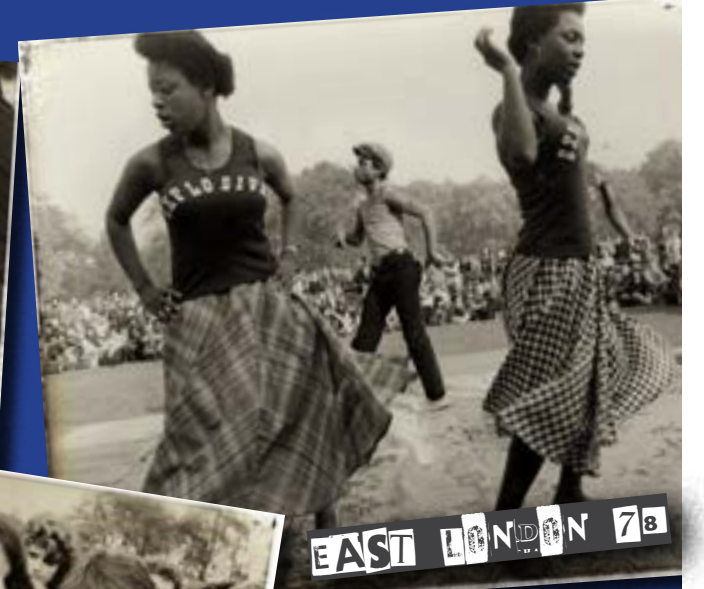
I went to Victoria Park. What I saw were hundreds and hundreds of people marching side by side.

I couldn't believe my eyes. These were white, English

people marching to help me and my family find our place in our adopted homeland.

When I got home I told my parents where I had been. My father was actually quite proud of me. I owe a lot to Rock Against Racism.

It gave me the confidence to find a voice, but also made me feel I was part of something bigger.”



transformed into action.”

Red Saunders was one of the signatories to the NME letter. “We got letters from all over,” he said. “They'd say something like, ‘I'm Tommy and I live in Aberystwyth and we've got a NF teacher. Can you please help?’”

“I'd write back and say, ‘That's fantastic Tommy. You are RAR Aberystwyth. All the luck!’”

People described the joy of finding something they could get involved with as school students. “When Rock Against Racism was set up we all jumped aboard,” said London activist Polly Wilson.

“At last we could fight back.” Lucy Whitman helped edit RAR's fanzine, *Temporary Hoarding*.

“RAR was so successful because it made politics fun,” she said. “RAR also encouraged a whole generation of young activists to do things

for themselves.”

ANL worker Roger Green described how “within weeks groups took on a life of their own”.

School Kids Against the Nazis (Skan) produced six issues of Skan fanzine in just nine months.

“Skan was not a dry political hackish paper written by socialists no longer at school,” said Roger. “It was written by school students and reflected all their excitement and creativity in being active in the anti-fascist movement.”

One letter published from Sheffield read, “Sheffield Skan is now three months old. We cover 20 schools and colleges in the Sheffield and Rotherham area. We have distributed over 5,000 leaflets in schools and sold hundreds of badges.”

“The badges seem to travel because we keep seeing kids from

schools where we don't know anyone wearing them. In some cases kids have recruited teachers into the Anti Nazi League.”

Another letter came from north London. “We have set up a Skan group in our school and have collected money to set up our own fanzine,” it read.

“I wanted to tell people how easy it is to do this. All it takes is a bit of time and energy and it's a great laugh.”

A huge anti-Nazi march to Victoria Park, east London, in 1978 saw 80,000 people demonstrate against the NF before reaching a RAR gig headlined by The Clash.

The scale of the movement gave black and Asian people confidence. Socialist activist Balwinder Rana described how the ANL “gave tremendous courage and hope to Asian and black people”.

Steel Pulse keyboard player Selwyn Brown said, “Rock Against Racism gave a voice to those who otherwise felt silenced.”

Reminiscences of RAR—Rocking Against Racism 1976-1982. Published by Redwords, £15. Available from Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Go to bookmarksbookshop.co.uk or phone 020 7637 1848

Hassan Mahamdallie, director of the Muslim Institute

“ONE MORNING in the 70s we awoke to find ‘NF’ painted in two-foot high letters on our garage door.

My dad silently painted it over but it left an ugly stain that served as a reminder that someone, somewhere, hated us enough to mark us out in the dead of night.

When I heard that The Clash were headlining the ANL/RAR carnival in Victoria Park I was determined to be there.

I can still picture us marching past the old fascist haunt, the Bladebone pub, where we shouted at boozy demoralised Nazis outside. I wasn't used to seeing Nazis stripped of their menace—it put a spring in my step. Towards the end of the day helpers started collecting for the ANL/RAR.

I looked beside, around and behind me at the sea of mostly white faces, and something clicked.

I realised for the first time that there were lots of white people who hated racism and were prepared to fight it. Maybe Powell and the NF weren't an inevitable part of life and could be overcome?

It was a complete revelation and changed my life forever.”

PICTURES BY JOHN STURROCK, VIRGINIA TURBETT AND PHIL MCGOWAN



WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

CASTRO

CUBA AND THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

SOCIALIST WORKER BRANCH MEETINGS

BRADFORD

Thu 15 Dec, 7pm,
Glyde House,
Little Horton Lane
(opposite the ice rink),
BD5 0BQ

BRISTOL

Wed 14 Dec, 7.30pm,
YHA, 14 Narrow Quay,
BS1 4QA

CARDIFF

Wed 21 Dec, 7.30pm,
Cathays Community Centre,
Cathays Terrace,
CF24 4HX

COLCHESTER

Wed 14 Dec, 7.30pm,
The Odd One Out,
28 Mersea Rd,
CO2 7ET

COVENTRY

Wed 14 Dec, 7.30pm,
West Indian Centre,
159 Spon St, CV1 3BB

EXETER

Thu 15 Dec, 6.30pm,
New Horizon Cafe,
47 Longbrook St,
EX4 6AW

LONDON: BRENT AND HARROW

Thu 15 Dec, 7.30pm,
The Pepperpot Centre,
1a Thorpe Close,
Ladbroke Grove (very close to the station),
W10 5XL

LONDON: Brixton

Wed 14 Dec, 7pm,
Vida Walsh Centre,
2b Saltoun Rd (near Effra Rd, facing Windrush Square),
SW2 1EP

LONDON: Ealing

Thu 15 Dec, 7.30pm,
Y Lounge,
YMCA West London,
25 St Mary's Rd,
W5 2RE

LONDON: HACKNEY

Thu 15 Dec, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner Lower Clapton Rd),
E5 0PU

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Wed 14 Dec, 7pm,
Oxford House,
Derbyshire St (opposite Bethnal Green Rd Tesco),
E2 6HG

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

Wed 14 Dec, 7.30pm,
Quaker Meeting House,
1a Jewel Rd (off Hoe St),
E17 4QU

MANCHESTER: LONGSIGHT AND LEVENSHULME

Thu 15 Dec, 7.30pm,
Inspire, 747 Stockport Rd,
M19 3AR

OXFORD

Wed 14 Dec, 7.30pm,
Restore,
Manzil Way (off Cowley Rd),
OX4 1YH

ROTHERHAM

Wed 14 Dec, 7pm,
Talbot Lane Methodist Church Centre,
Moorgate St,
S60 2EY

SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

Thu 15 Dec, 7pm,
Central United Reformed Church,
60 Norfolk St (near Crucible Theatre),
S1 2JB

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

ABERDEEN

Donald Trump and Marine Le Pen—right wing populists or fascists?

Wed 14 Dec, 6pm,
Belmont Cinema Cafe,
49 Belmont St, AB10 1JS

BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

Donald Trump and Marine Le Pen—right wing populists or fascists?

Wed 14 Dec, 7pm,
Birmingham LGBT Centre,
38/40 Holloway Circus,
B1 1EQ

BOLTON

Beekeeping—a Marxist analysis

with free honey tasting!
Thu 15 Dec, 6.30pm,
Bolton Socialist Club,
16 Wood St (off Bradshawgate),
BL1 1DY

CAMBRIDGE

Bring down the borders—why we oppose all immigration controls

Thu 5 Jan, 7.30pm,
Signal Box, Glenalmond Avenue (off Clarendon Rd),
CB2 8DB

CHESTERFIELD

Trade unions in the era of Jeremy Corbyn

Thu 15 Dec, 7.30pm,
Chesterfield Library,
New Beetwell St, S40 1QN

GLASGOW

Film showing & discussion of Pride

Thu 15 Dec, 7pm,
Avant Garde, 33-44 King St,
Merchant City,
G1 5QT

HUDDERSFIELD

Art, society and revolution

Wed 14 Dec, 6.30pm,
Brian Jackson House,
2 New North Parade (near both train and bus stations),
HD1 5JP

HULL

Climate change, capitalism and class struggle

Thu 15 Dec, 7.30pm,
Cafe Licious,
104 Cottingham Rd,
HU6 7RZ

LANCASTER

How powerful is the media?

Thu 15 Dec, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Meeting House Lane, LA1 1TX

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

Syria—revolution, counter-revolution and civil war

Thu 15 Dec, 7pm,
The Swarthmore Education Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Square,
LS3 1AD

LONDON: HARINGEY

The invention of tradition—why do we bother with Christmas?

Wed 14 Dec, 7.30pm,
St John Vianney Church Hall,
386 West Green Rd (corner Vincent Rd),
N15 3QH

LONDON: ISLINGTON

Bring down the borders—why we oppose all immigration controls

Thu 15 Dec, 7pm,
The Old Fire Station,
84 Mayton St,
N7 6QT

LONDON: NEWHAM

Trotsky, art and revolution

Wed 14 Dec, 7pm,
Stratford Advice Arcade,
107-109 The Grove (next to Morrisons car park),
E15 1HP

LONDON: SOUTHWARK

Is the working class changing? From coal mines to call centres

Thu 15 Dec, 7pm,
Snug room, The Grand Union,
26 Camberwell Grove (off Camberwell Church St),
SE5 8RE

MANCHESTER: CHORLTON

From Enoch Powell to Donald Trump—the resistible rise of the right

Wed 14 Dec, 7pm,
Chorlton Central Church (Meeting Room),
Barlow Moor Rd,
M21 8BF

MANCHESTER: CITY CENTRE

Drugs, alienation and capitalism

Thu 15 Dec, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St, M2 5NS

POOLE

Arguments for revolution

Wed 14 Dec, 7.30pm,
Butler & Hops,
88 High St, BH15 1DB

PORTSMOUTH

Council cuts, NHS in crisis—how can we defend the welfare state?

Wed 14 Dec, 7.30pm,
Somerstown Community Centre,
River's St,
PO5 4EZ

SOUTHAMPTON

Why we support strikes

Wed 14 Dec, 7.30pm,
Central Baptist Church Hall,
Devonshire Rd,
SO15 2GY

SWANSEA

The invention of tradition—why do we bother with Christmas?

Thu 15 Dec, 7.30pm,
Brynmill Community Centre,
St Albans Rd,
SA2 0BP

WOLVERHAMPTON AND WALSALL

Resisting the rise of the racist right

Thu 15 Dec, 7.30pm,
The Royal Hotel,
Ablewell St,
WS1 2EL

YORK

Bring down the borders—why we oppose all immigration controls

Wed 14 Dec, 7.30pm,
Sea Horse Hotel,
4 Fawcett St,
YO10 4AH

Holiday greetings to all our readers

● The next issue of Socialist Worker, dated 14 December, will be the last issue of 2016

● Our first issue of 2017 goes to press on Tuesday 3 January

● Until then check our website and social media for reports and updates

● Send news and reports to reports@socialistworker.co.uk

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SOCIALIST WORKER APPEAL

Socials and fundraisers

BARNESLEY
Christmas SWP Appeal fundraiser
Thu 15 Dec, 6pm,
YMCA, Blucher St,
S70 1AP

EDINBURGH
Christmas social and film showing—The black history of Britain
Wed 14 Dec, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria St,
EH1 2JL

MANCHESTER
Revolutionary Cabaret—comedy, live music, food and more
Fri 16 Dec, 7.30pm,
Nexus Art Cafe,
2 Dale St,
M1 1JW

MANCHESTER: CITY CENTRE
Drugs, alienation and capitalism
Thu 15 Dec, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St, M2 5NS

POOLE
Arguments for revolution
Wed 14 Dec, 7.30pm,
Butler & Hops,
88 High St, BH15 1DB

Entertaining but superficial look at gun violence in US

Spike Lee's new film *Chi-Raq* takes a swipe at the gun industry and stereotypes of black people but it is not always clear cut, writes **Moyra Samuels**

"THEY DIE every day in my city," is a line from the opening track to Spike Lee's new film *Chi-Raq*, released in cinemas last Friday.

Lee and co-writer Kevin Willmott's inspiration is the satirical anti-war play *Lysistrata* by ancient Greek playwright Aristophanes. *Lysistrata* stops a war by organising a sex strike which leads to the powerful men around her giving up their weapons.

The film addresses "black on black violence" in neighbourhoods where it is easier to get a gun than a computer and looks at the exclusion of poor people from education.

Lee's *Lysistrata* is reminded of this by a neighbour who quotes Malcolm X saying, "The best way to hide things from Negroes is to put it in a book."

The statistics of black people murdered in Chicago from 2001 to 2015 equate to the number of deaths of Americans in the US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. For the black people in the south side of Chicago it is like living in a war zone.

The main characters are warring members of the Trojans and Spartans, rival gangs. Local people get caught in the middle because "they can't trust the police and are afraid of the gangs".

Challenged

Lysistrata's boyfriend is *Chi-Raq*, a revered rapper and the Trojans' leader. Her sex strike idea is a response to the rival gang setting her flat on fire, and being challenged by the mother of a child killed in crossfire.

Using women as the drivers of the narrative is refreshing.

And the organising groups, protests and occupations point to the Black Lives Matter movement led by



A SCENE from *Chi-Raq*

women activists and mothers of those killed.

The film transfers the form of the Greek play using rap and spoken word imaginatively with hard hitting music from black artists such as Jennifer Hudson, R Kelly and Nick Cannon.

Lysistrata, played by Teyonah Parris, is sexually powerful, tough and steadfast in her role as the leader of the sex strike.

Gang members use wheelchairs as a result of being shot, challenging the racist stereotype of the powerful,

sexually virile black man.

The film speaks directly to black and white communities about the devastation caused by the proliferation of guns in the US.

Father Mike Corridan (John Cusack) points the finger at the profits made by the gun industry, while unemployment rates in Chicago's south side are four times the national average of 5 percent.

Poverty, alienation and economic exclusion are clearly implicated as the basis of the killings.

Spike Lee may be challenging

the way black women are depicted within rap music and gangster films as sexually available. He also questions the use of guns as an affirmation of masculinity.

But with the frequent references from men and women to a woman's "booty" it is not always clear if he parodies this stereotype or accepts it.

The soundtrack and the new and established black talent makes *Chi-Raq* an entertaining, though superficial, tale of bringing peace to the ghetto.

Chi-Raq is in cinemas now

The Council's focus on cuts doesn't go deep enough

TELEVISION

THE COUNCIL

BBC One Scotland, Wednesday 7 December, 9pm

THE COUNCIL, a new three-part documentary, follows the experiences of workers at Scotland's third largest council in Fife.

The council has no large cities but a mix of rural farming areas, former mining villages and coastal fishing towns combined with declining shipbuilding and offshore fabrication yards.

It has a long history of

Labour and trade union organisation but suffered hugely from the onslaught on traditional industries in the 1980s.

The show's content is familiar with the usual mix of filthy house clearances and interactions between council workers and colourful, sometimes challenging, service users.

But there is a focus on the £38 million cuts to the 2016-17 budget.

Successive years of cuts from Westminster and the Scottish National Party (SNP) government have been devastating.



Clearing an abandoned house

The SNP's emphasis on protecting health spending has left Scottish councils badly hit.

The first episode has brief glimpses of protests outside the council headquarters. The impact of austerity comes across with some of the workers and residents. One road worker explains the impossible pot-hole repair task after years of cuts and a lack of staff.

The bulk of the first show is spent on services for Fife's significant council housing stock and its social care services.

One thread follows a community worker trying to set up a complex process of consulting with local people over spending a meagre £10,000 on a run-down block of flats in Glenrothes.

It's hard to take this tokenistic "community engagement" seriously. As one resident says, "£10,000 isn't going to solve the problems ... round here. It's not enough."

I hope the series delves deeper into the impact of cuts to local services.

Arthur Nicoll

EXHIBITIONS

PEOPLE POWER: BLACK BRITISH ARTS AND ACTIVISM IN HACKNEY 1960s-2000s

Hackney Museum, 1 Reading Lane, E8 1GQ. Until 21 January

HACKNEY Museum explores people power, migration and politics as part of the borough's Black History Season 2016.

Visitors can see how African and Caribbean heritage influenced and helped shape the landscape of arts and culture of the London borough of Hackney. It uses film, photography, historical objects and shared memories.

Installation at Bedlam exhibition

BEDLAM: THE ASYLUM AND BEYOND

Wellcome Collection, 183 Euston Road, NW1 2BE. Until 15 January

FOLLOW THE rise and fall of the mental asylum and explore how it has shaped the complex landscape of mental health today.

Reimagine the institution, informed by the experiences of the patients, doctors, artists and reformers who inhabited the asylum or created alternatives to it.

TOP 5 BOOKS

Bestsellers at Bookmarks, the socialist Bookshop

- 1917: Russia's Red Year**
Tim Sanders and John Newsinger
- Reminiscences of RAR—Rocking Against Racism 1976-1982**
Roger Huddle and Red Saunders
- The Leveller Revolution**
John Rees
- Another day in the death of America**
Gary Younge
- Lenin on the train**
Catherine Merridale

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DELEGATES burst into applause at a reference to Adolf Hitler taking power, at the National Policy Institute's (NPI) conference in Washington DC last month.

Richard Bertrand Spencer urged them, “Let’s party like it’s 1933,” and some did Nazi salutes at the end of the speech.

Head of the Nazi NPI think tank, Spencer is one of the main intellectuals of the “alt-right” movement. He came up with the term in 2008 to seem “edgy” and “punk” against the “fuddy duddy conservatives”.

He was too extreme even for Hungary’s racist ruling party Fidesz, which deported him in 2014 for trying to organise a white supremacist rally.

Since then Donald Trump’s presidential campaign has given them a lot to party about.

Trump appointed Stephen Bannon to run his campaign and then as his chief strategist and senior counsellor once he won.

Under Bannon’s leadership the Breitbart News website defended Spencer from “claims of racism”.

But the alt-right is broader than Nazis such as Spencer. One of its poster boys is Milo Yiannopoulos, a deeply racist and sexist blogger. He once wrote an article saying Nazis were a “fringe element” in the movement. So they attacked him as a “Jewish homosexual”.

The alt-right is not a movement in the sense of an organisation or a mobilisation in the streets. It’s a loose grouping of right wingers who have gained prominence through their online presence.

Core
Nor is it homogenous. A core of Hitler-admirers and Ku Klux Klan (KKK) members have built around them a bigger following of Islamophobes, men’s rights activists and other bigots.

Breitbart News is the “respectable” end of a swamp of right wing chat sites and forums. An army of online trolls project their message through memes and fake news stories on social media.

The alt-right flourished in the wake of the rise and decline of the Tea Party movement that grew after Barack Obama was elected as the first black US president.

The Tea Party organised rallies and, with support from parts of the Republican party machine, it ran candidates against the traditional right.

They argued that candidates had betrayed conservative values after going to Washington. It was based on reactionary right wing politics, a backlash against “political correctness” and nostalgia for the peak of US power.

US conservatism has always railed against “big government” interference in “individual liberty”—but it’s a strange, right



IT’S TIME TO DELETE ALT-RIGHT

The movement of bigots that Donald Trump has brought off web forums and into the White House tries to look edgy but Nazis are at its heart, warns Tomáš Tengely-Evans



wing vision of liberty. Tea Party figurehead Rand Paul’s libertarianism didn’t stop him arguing that, “A free society will abide unofficial private discrimination, even when that means allowing hate-filled groups to exclude people based on the colour of their skin.” The people who ran the Republican Party were part of a political establishment that had presided over the death of the American Dream. Jobs had been lost, wages stagnated and

“Breitbart is the respectable end of a swamp of right wing chat sites

it became harder for people to see a future for their children. That made it harder for those politicians to energise their voters. The Tea Party slogan to “take back our country” fit better with the mood of discontent. Its candidates won important positions in the Republican Party, and shifted its policy debates to the right. But as Tea Party candidates left office, became embarrassments or were incorporated into the Republican machine,

WHO’S WHO

The troll

MILO YIANNOPOULOS (top left) is the poster boy for online bigotry. He gives voice to the swamp of bigots who infest web forums and lead harassment campaigns. As well as bashing Muslims, a favourite theme is “men’s rights activism” to undo the gains of women’s liberation.

The ideologue

PAT BUCHANAN (top middle) developed many of the future alt-right’s ideas in the 1980s. He worked for Ronald Reagan’s government, then quit to fill the “vacuum” he saw to its right. He opposed immigration to defend “white identity”, and led the backlash against “political correctness” on abortion rights and LGBT+ rights.

The strategist

STEPHEN BANNON (top right) took the website set up by Tea Party supporter Andrew Breitbart and made it the alt-right movement’s “respectable” face. This got him a place on Donald Trump’s team, where he can be the white supremacists’ link to the White House.

The Nazi

RICHARD SPENCER (bottom right) runs the National Policy Institute (NPI) think tank. They are about as overt as modern fascism gets, applauding references to Adolf Hitler and aping his Nazi salute. Spencer coined the phrase alt-right in 2008.

The president

DONALD TRUMP’S bid for office followed several years as a champion of the racist Birther movement, accusing Barack Obama of being secretly Kenyan. This brought him into contact with the vultures picking at the Tea Party’s carcass that were to become the alt-right.

its ability to mobilise dwindled. The Tea Party gave way to the more overtly racist Birther movement, which demanded Obama provide proof that he was born in the US and not in Kenya. Trump was one of the most prominent figures to take up their cause. This is when the Tea Party spokesman Andrew Breitbart first launched Breitbart News. After Breitbart’s death in 2012, Bannon took control and shifted the website further to the

right. Bannon and the alt-right were able to relate to the Tea Party’s most racist elements and pull them further to the right. While tapping into the mood that fed the Tea Party, they criticised it as too moderate.

Both talk about “limited government”, but the alt-right focuses on white identity while the Tea Party concentrates on “individual liberty”.

THESE white nationalist currents aren’t new to the US right. For example, from the 1930s right wing Republicans and Southern Democrats formed a conservative coalition.

They opposed president Franklin D Roosevelt’s greater government intervention and welfare programmes. Roosevelt was a Democrat, but in the southern states the Democrats had been the party of the old slave-owners and still fiercely opposed rights for African-American people.

This coalition cohered around Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater in 1964, who campaigned against the Civil Rights Act and desegregation.

Goldwater was trounced. Corrupt Republican president Richard Nixon was a further disappointment to the right.

But by 1980s they seemed to have found their man in Ronald Reagan. Many key right wingers played central roles in his administration. But some wanted more, and began to cry betrayal.

Ideologues

Pat Buchanan, who would become one the racist right’s main ideologues, worked for Reagan’s administration.

After leaving it in 1986 Buchanan argued that, “the greatest vacuum in American politics is to the right of Ronald Reagan”.

He developed many of the positions later shared by the alt-right—and popularised by Trump.

Buchanan argued against immigration to defend “white identity”. He was also one of the main proponents for a “culture war” against the “politically correct left”.

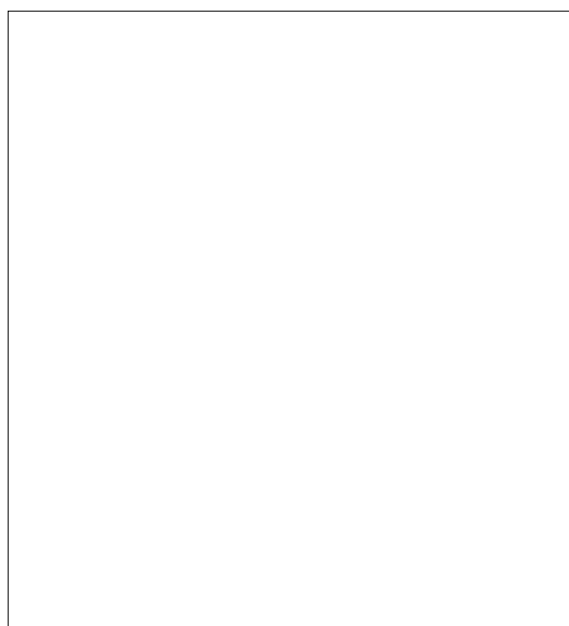
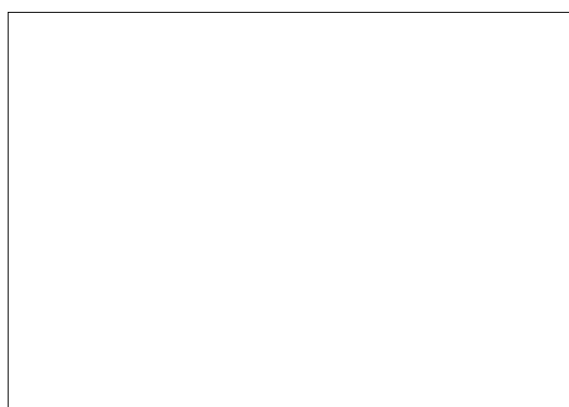
Railing against the legacy of the gains such as women’s liberation and Civil Rights is now one of the alt-right’s favourite themes.

While these currents go back a long way, they came to the fore because of the perceived failures of George W Bush’s presidency in the 2000s.

Here was a right winger who promised to stand for conservative values, but led a disastrous war then ended up bailing out the banks.

This crisis of the Republican party and disconnect from its base allowed the right to gain.

The process won’t end here, but it can go in different ways. The likes of Spencer have been



1964 Republican candidate Barry Goldwater addresses a campaign rally (top), the racist Birther movement helped create the alt-right (above)

able to gain a hearing because they swim in a much bigger pool of US conservatism.

Their white supremacy chimes with Trump’s talk of banning Muslims and cracking down on immigration.

They aren’t the first set of fascists to put themselves at the core of a much broader layer of racists and conservatives.

Unstable

Such formations are unstable. As the most organised and conscious section, the Nazis could gain in influence and harden up their softer support into a real fascist organisation.

On the other hand, as the Trump administration absorbs the alt-right, the embarrassing Nazis could be ditched to make the rest more palatable for the bosses and the voters.

Trump has already tried to distance himself from Spencer and the toxic NPI. Yet he has staunchly defended Bannon. While the alt-right isn’t a movement that’s mobilising fascism on the streets, its rise feeds the climate in which one could emerge.

That danger will only grow now the defender of the Nazis has the ear of the president elect.

Toxic brew—the Tea Party



Doing Israel’s dirty work is taking its toll on Fatah

Displays of unity thinly masks a profound crisis in the party that runs the Palestinian Authority, writes Nick Clark

A RIFT has grown so deep inside the Fatah party in Palestine that over the past few months it has even spilled over into gunfights in the street.

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas was comfortably re-elected as Fatah leader last week.

Delegates at the opening of Fatah’s conference last Tuesday voted unanimously to re-elect Abbas by cheering for him.

But the display of unity thinly masked a profound crisis inside the party. At the heart of it is the fact that the Palestinian Authority (PA)—which governs the West Bank and which Fatah leads—is increasingly unpopular.

Years of Fatah’s cooperation with the Israeli occupation—policing the resistance while pursuing futile negotiations with the Israeli state—have failed.

The PA is no nearer to ending the occupation in favour of its inadequate two-state solution than it was 20 years ago.

Now the PA faces growing discontent. A recent poll showed 47 percent of Palestinians see the PA as a burden.

And polls have consistently shown over 60 percent want Abbas to resign.

Intifada

At the same time 48 percent want a return to armed intifada, or uprising. And at least 241 Palestinians have been killed by Israelis during sustained unrest that began in October last year.

But instead of organising the resistance, the PA has responded with a security crackdown targeting protests and refugee camps.

Raids on the camps by PA forces have ended in clashes with some of Fatah’s own armed militias.

Discontent with Abbas in

Palestinian society has been reflected inside Fatah itself.

Meanwhile, Abbas has used the security crackdown as a way of getting rid of some of his leading critics.

One Fatah militia leader, Ahmad Izzat Halawa, was even arrested and beaten to death by PA forces—prompting street protests and resignations by senior Fatah members.

Opposition to Abbas inside Fatah has centred on multimillionaire Mohammed Dahlan, who has been living in exile since 2011.

Dahlan has picked up some support by throwing money at projects and charities in refugee camps outside of the West Bank. He has also called for the PA to end security coordination with Israel.

But in wider Palestinian society he is even more unpopular than Abbas. Only five percent of Palestinians would back him in a presidential election against Abbas—and 59 percent oppose his return to Fatah.

Dahlan’s real strength is that he is supported by the powerful governments

of Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates—all US allies.

For them, Dahlan’s ruthless reputation make him an ideal candidate to lead Fatah.

As the PA security chief in Gaza, Dahlan—backed by the US and Israel—set up paramilitary gangs to fight the elected Hamas government.

Prior to Dahlan’s failed coup against Hamas in 2007 thousands of Hamas members said they were tortured by his forces. Dahlan also threatened violence against Fatah supporters sympathetic to Hamas.

Worried

The Israeli state is worried that Abbas can no longer hold things together. Leaked comments from a closed Tel Aviv security forum show it fears losing control when Abbas eventually steps down.

Some at the forum worried that fighting would allow Hamas to take over in the West Bank. Others raised the prospect of Israel “reoccupying” the West Bank to take full control themselves.

But Abbas has managed to cling on to power for now. He used last week’s conference to reassert his authority, having managed to block his opponents from attending.

Yet the growing pressures on him mean he will eventually have to go. When he does it could pave the way for more repression.

But it could also open up space for renewed resistance from below.

“The Israeli state fears losing control when Abbas steps down

Cowardly Labour MPs protect Blair

by CHARLIE KIMBER

TORY AND Labour MPs united last week to stop any further investigation into Tony Blair's war crimes in Iraq.

At the end of the parliamentary debate just five Labour MPs voted for a motion to hold Blair to account—and 158 voted to protect him.

More Tories voted for the motion than Labour MPs. It was defeated by 439 votes to 70.

The Scottish National Party (SNP) proposed the motion.

It noted that the Chilcot Report into the war had “provided substantial evidence of misleading information being presented by the then prime minister and others” in the run-up to the war.

Private

It said there was a stark contrast between “private correspondence to the United States government and public statements to parliament and to the people”.



SCHOOL STUDENTS join a protest against Tony Blair in Camden in 2003

PICTURE: MATT SAYWELL

It called for an investigation into the “contrast in public and private policy and of the presentation of intelligence”.

Labour MPs rushed to defend Blair.

Even a number who had voted against the Iraq war insisted that Blair had acted in “good faith”.

Labour's Clive Efford said, “I voted against the war but I did not for one minute think that Tony Blair lied to this House, or attempted to mislead me.”

Phil Wilson succeeded Blair as MP for Sedgefield.

“When I am called a Blairite, which is sometimes seen as a term of abuse, I wear

that term proudly as an accolade,” he said.

Labour's David Hanson said Chilcot had absolved Blair from any “decision to deceive parliament or the public”.

The SNP's Alex Salmond retorted that the next paragraph in the report said that Blair's speeches were “an

exercise in advocacy, not in sharing a crucial judgment”.

Earlier a meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party had insisted that there should be a three-line whip against the motion.

This meant there would be heavy pressure on MPs to attend and vote. The shadow cabinet was also reported

to have opposed the SNP motion.

In the end there was only a one-line whip, meaning that attendance was not regarded as crucial.

Bamboozled

One of the few Labour voices against Blair came from Paul Flynn. He said that MPs who had doubts about the war were “bribed, bullied or bamboozled into voting the wrong way”.

Green MP Caroline Lucas said there were clear indications that Blair had been “fixing the evidence around the policy to go to war”.

One notable absentee from the debate was Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.

In July Corbyn had rightly said, “We now know that the House was misled in the run-up to the war.”

“All those who took the decisions laid bare in the Chilcot Report must face up to the consequences of their actions.”

But he missed last week's vote because he was “committed elsewhere”.

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Protesters face down the US state at Standing Rock camp

Native Americans have won their struggle at Standing Rock in North Dakota. Alistair Farrow looks at how they defied police violence, corruption and cronyism to defend their water supply

THE STANDING Rock Sioux tribe has won in its fight against the might of the US state and the giants of big oil.

“A lot of people didn’t believe us when we said we would change the world,” said Alice Brown Otter, who helped organise solidarity protests in Washington DC.

For months thousands of Native Americans and their supporters have camped out at the Standing Rock Sioux reservation, blocking the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL).

Cops responded with rubber bullets, sound cannons, tear gas and attack dogs.

The assault was so fierce that one protester, Sophia Wilansky, may have to have her arm amputated after being injured by a concussion grenade.

Falling

But the protests grew despite cops’ brutality.

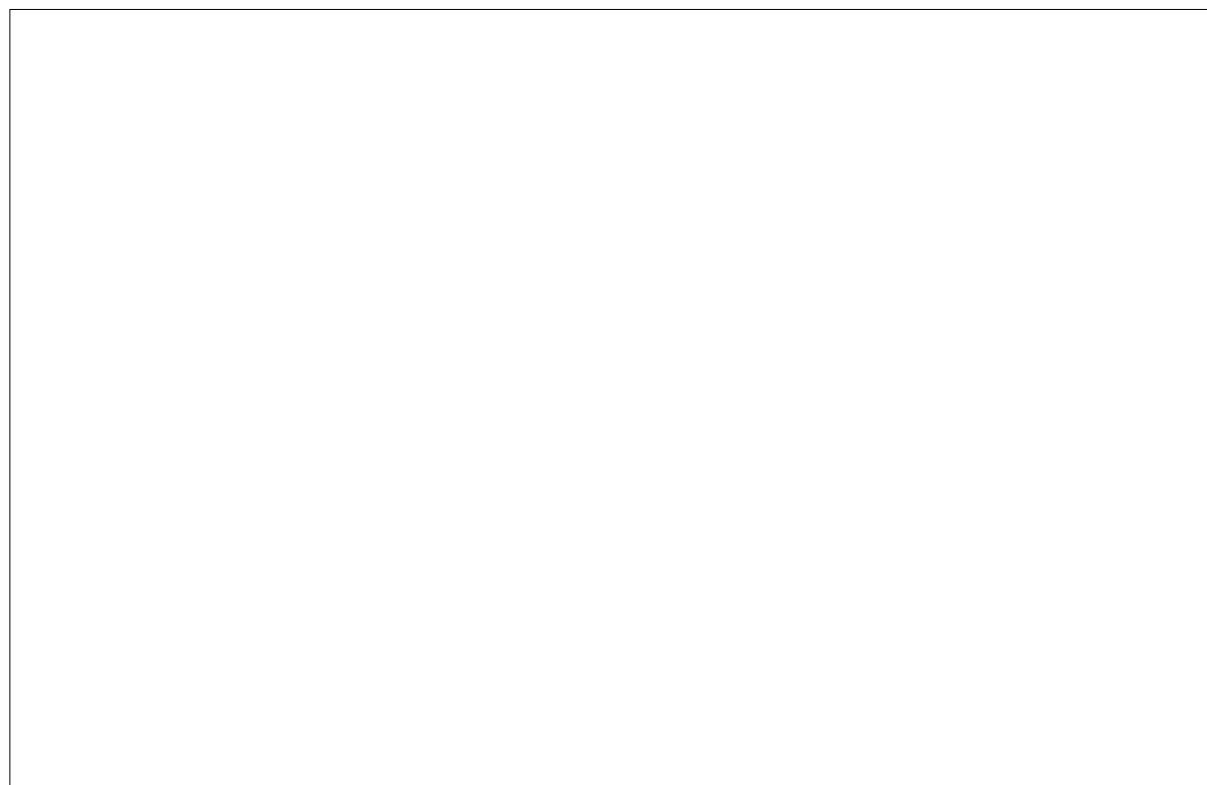
The governor of North Dakota, Jack Dalrymple, issued an eviction notice to protesters on Monday of last week.

He also brought in the National Guard and even law enforcement agencies from other states. Under pressure, Dalrymple has since claimed he did not intend to forcibly remove protesters.

But the notice—and the threat of eviction—was still live up until Sunday’s announcement.

Only two weeks ago the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), which owns the land the camp is based on, threatened to forcibly remove the protesters.

Now they have been forced to deny permission for drilling the pipeline



A NATIVE American protest faces a line of cops armed to the teeth

and have ordered an environmental review.

But some protesters remain rightly sceptical, “Until that drill is shut down it’s not over yet,” said Frank Archambault from the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

A legal battle against the pipeline has ground on since USACE wrote a letter to the Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) in February 2015. THPO raised concerns in response, but was ignored.

Kelcy Warren is the CEO of Energy

Transfer Partners, the parent company of Dakota Access LLP, the firm building the pipeline. She told a reporter that the tribe should have let them know about their concerns earlier.

“I really wish, for the Standing Rock Sioux, that they had engaged in discussions way before they did,” she said. “We could have changed the route. But it’s too late.”

Yet an audio recording from 2014 exposed Warren’s claim and showed the tribe’s concerns were raised with

the company but were ignored.

And USACE had already moved the pipeline route once south of the city of Bismarck, which is north of the reservation. They were concerned about contaminating water there.

Those concerns didn’t extend to Standing Rock Sioux, whom the USACE failed to consult meaningfully about the change in route.

But the protesters have stopped the project in its tracks. Faced with the might of the US state, they stood their ground and won.

Governor’s greasy oil money

IN 2014 North Dakota governor Jack Dalrymple described fracking as “very safe and really the key to the future of not only North Dakota but really our entire nation”.

Dalrymple sits on the North Dakota Industrial Commission, which is responsible for overseeing the state’s oil industry.

In other US states, there is at least a formal separation of political and economic interests. In North Dakota bosses don’t feel the need to bother with such cosmetic distinctions.

Shares

Dalrymple owns shares in oil firm ExxonMobil. Between them, he and his wife own stock in 16 energy firms, and possibly more.

The last time Dalrymple ran for governor in 2012 he received over £350,000 in donations from the energy and natural resources sector.

The Political Action Committees of both ExxonMobil and Marathon Oil both donated to Dalrymple’s campaign last time he ran for governor.

So did the chief executive of Continental Resources, and the firm’s lawyer—who coincidentally has his offices in Bismarck, the nearest town to Standing Rock.

He is up for re-election this year and can likely rely on the same support. Maybe that’s why Dalrymple wanted the federal government to wave the pipeline through.

Spills and disasters show why pipelines are dangerous

THE PROTESTS at Standing Rock focused on the likely contamination of the tribe’s drinking water if the pipeline went ahead.

It would cross the Missouri river a mile upstream from the reservation.

If the pipe leaked, it would contaminate the drinking water of 17 million people.

But lurking in the background is the booming US domestic oil industry and North Dakota’s transformation from an agricultural

centre to an oil-producing powerhouse.

Oil is now central to the state’s economy and politicians have facilitated oil firms swooping in to make huge profits (see right).

Since 1986 more than three million gallons of oil have been spilled from US pipelines.

More than 500 people have died and 2,300 have been injured.

And there is a shocking recent history of oil disasters in North Dakota.

A 2013 pipe leak in Tioga saw over 20,000



An oil train exploding in North Dakota in 2013

barrels of oil escape from an underground pipeline and rise to the surface.

A train carrying oil, again in 2013, came off the tracks and exploded.

And pipelines carrying saltwater—a byproduct of oil production—regularly leak.

This year one pipe leaked 7,000 gallons. The same pipe system last year leaked three million gallons, contaminating the Missouri river.

Any method of transporting oil is dangerous, and so is burning it.

IN BRIEF

Demo will defend Tina Rothery

ANTI-FRACKING activists were set to gather in Preston on Friday in defence of Tina Rothery.

Fracking firm Cuadrilla is suing her for over £55,000—the cost of evicting an anti-fracking protest camp in Lancashire.

Tina refuses to pay this unjust sum and could therefore be jailed.

●Rally 11am, Friday 9 December outside Preston Combined Court, Openshaw Place, Ring Way, Preston, PR1 2LL

Cleaners want proper treatment

CLEANERS AT the London School of Economics (LSE) held a protest on Friday of last week as part of their fight to win the same terms and conditions as other workers.

The cleaners are employed by Noonan, an outsourcing firm.

Friday marked the second deadline given by the UVW union to LSE and Noonan management to agree to a timetable to discuss the cleaners' demands.

Cinema bosses dig in against the union

WORKERS AT the Picturehouse Central cinema in London had their pay claim for the London Living Wage rejected on Friday of last week.

Cineworld plc, which owns Picturehouse, also refused to recognise the workers' Bectu union. The company has denied union recognition at every Picturehouse site apart from the Ritzy in Brixton, where workers have been fighting consistently and have won some wage increases.

Workers should demand the union calls more strike dates before Christmas to keep the pressure on.

Union rep faces action after ET role

CAMPAIGNERS ARE calling for support for Sen Kingsland, UCU branch secretary at the College of North West London

Sen faces suspension and disciplinary action after representing a member at an Employment Tribunal.

●Send a message of support to senkingsland@hotmail.com

Doncaster prepares for waste strike

OVER 130 members of the Unite union working at a Doncaster waste transfer station plan a one-day strike on Monday over management attitudes and a "derisory" pay offer.

It will leave some workers 30 pence an hour worse off in real terms.

The workers are employed by Sita UK which trades as Suez. The strike follows a 98 percent vote in favour on a turnout of 94 percent.

EDUCATION



STRIKING IN defence of Simon O'Hara earlier this year

PICTURE: GUY SMALMAN

Don't let the bosses sack Simon O'Hara

by SADIE ROBINSON

BOSSSES AT Birmingham's Small Heath School have sacked former NUT union rep Simon O'Hara. They disciplined Simon after he helped to lead several strikes at the school.

Three days later school management announced they had a sponsor to turn the school into an academy.

The national union needs to urgently throw its weight behind the fight to defend Simon and trade union rights.

NUT union members are voting in an indicative ballot on strikes to demand Simon is reinstated. Birmingham NUT is urging a yes vote.

Teachers held 11 days of strikes against plans to turn the school into an academy and forced bosses to withdraw

them. They escalated to weekly three-day strikes after Simon was suspended in January.

Unfortunately the national union refused to agree to strikers' calls for the walkouts to be escalated further, then called off the action altogether.

But at a recent union meeting, workers voted unanimously in favour of strikes in the event of Simon's dismissal.

Vague

Bosses originally suspended Simon on vague gross misconduct charges.

NUT general secretary Kevin Courtney told Socialist Worker at the time, "Management suspended him in what we can only see as an act of trade union victimisation."

Bosses then lifted the suspension—only to suspend him again on new grounds.

Now Simon has been told that there has been an "irretrievable breakdown of trust".

Strikes can stop victimisation. An all-out strike by PCS union members at the National Gallery last year won the reinstatement of union rep Candy Udwin.

A month later bosses at London's School of Oriental and African Studies suspended Unison union rep Sandy Nicoll. An unofficial walkout by Unison and UCU union members won his reinstatement.

And earlier that year, a vote for strikes by NUJ union members stopped the victimisation of union rep Phil Turner.

The Small Heath ballot ends on Friday of next week.

It must deliver an overwhelming vote for strikes and stand up for trade union rights and against academies.

MORE THAN A SCORE CONFERENCE

Slay assessment monster

SOME 300 people attended the More Than A Score conference last Saturday.

The conference is the result of an alliance between the National Union of Teachers, academics and parents' groups.

It is a response to the increasingly chaotic and damaging over-testing of children in primary schools.

Parent Gemma Haley spoke about how stressed her six-year old son is with school. She said, "My son doesn't like school because of the testing."

Headteacher Siobhan Collngwood said, "There is a monster stalking our schools and that monster is assessment."

Children's author and professor of children's literature Michael Rosen ridiculed the spelling and grammar tests that children sit in Year Six.

"The only reason we have the Spag grammar test is

because Michael Gove wanted something with right/wrong answers," he said.

"The problem is, that it's not true."

These tests were used to judge teachers and schools rather than advance learning.

Professor Wynne Harlen said that teachers were in favour of assessment.

Learning

But she added that this should be focused on forms that take children's learning forward.

It should not be based on methods that are simply snapshots of what children may know at a particular time.

Parent and teacher activists pointed out that it was necessary to follow the conference with real action against this year's Sats tests—including a possible boycott.

Dave Gilchrist

●For details of the campaign and how to get involved go to morethanascore.co.uk

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Victory as academy trust halted

CAMPAIGNERS IN South Gloucestershire have succeeded in stopping one academy trust from taking over their schools.

Oasis was one of the trusts in the running to take over Winterbourne Academy and Yate Academy.

The Ridings Trust, which previously ran the schools, collapsed earlier this year.

But Oasis has now withdrawn its offer to run the schools.

The climbdown follows a 400-strong protest by parents, teachers and students, and a 300-strong public meeting.

Parents and students had raged about secrecy and lack of accountability.

This success shows that fighting back can win.

DISTRIBUTION

Into battle for higher pay

DISTRIBUTION workers in Solihull, Birmingham, planned to walk out for higher pay on Thursday this week and next Monday.

The workers are demanding a rise from the national minimum wage of £7.20 hour to £8.45 an hour.

The GMB union members work for distribution giant Arcadia, whose chair is disgraced former BHS boss Sir Philip Green.

Trade unionists should build solidarity for the picket lines.

Meanwhile in a separate dispute workers at Tangerine, a York confectionery factory, are continuing their fight over pay and pension rights.

Last week they held a series of one-hour walkouts at the beginning and end of Thursday's three shifts.

FIGHTING THE CUTS

A ROLLING protest gathered at Walsall Art Gallery last Thursday demanding that the Labour council fight the Tory cuts, not implement them. At its height it was 200 people strong.

The gallery, along with 14 out of 15 libraries and the town's historic Leather Museum, faces closure.

Further cuts to social care and other vital council services are also planned.

Walsall council's Labour leader Sean Coughlan shamefully told the protest, "This country voted for austerity, we have to deal with it."

Libraries campaigner Alan Gibbons was among those to point out that they need to take the fight



Striking in Solihull

PICTURE: CHRISTINE LEWIS

The action is solid with over 25 strikers at each picket.

Similar action was planned for this Wednesday although the GMB has said it wants to resume talks and has asked the Acas arbitration service to be involved.

GMB organiser Ben Kirkham said that the dispute was "workers facing up to a bully employer".

to the government, not just act as a transmission belt for Tory austerity.

Meanwhile, in Portsmouth campaigners were set to protest at £9 million worth of proposed cuts before a full city council meeting from 1.15pm-2pm next Tuesday.

They argue the cuts will cause deep distress to staff and the people who rely on the services that are to be slashed.

In addition, huge amounts of resources will be used in response to the crisis the cuts will cause.

●For details of the Portsmouth protesters, go to Protest at Brutal, Dishonest Council Cuts on Facebook

Thanks to Martin Lynch

STUDENTS

Students' action on rents

STUDENTS AT Goldsmiths University celebrated a victory last week as the university agreed to wave some £650,000 in rent for halls of residence.

Students paying up to £170 a week in rent have been living in unsanitary conditions.

The firm that runs the halls, College and Campus Living Village (CLV), held an open meeting for students.

Students attended and slammed the company for its mismanagement of the halls.

The Cut the Rent campaign has spoken out against the privatisation of the university's halls since the decision to privatise them was taken.

Students have now been offered a 35 percent reduction in their rent.

The university needs to bring the halls back into university management.

■A GROUP of students at Warwick University have occupied a brand new multimillion pound conference venue on the university's campus.

They are protesting against the university's participation in the government's Teaching Excellence Framework, which is used to assess university staff and justify tuition fee increases as well as other issues.

■MANAGEMENT at University College London (UCL) have refused student demand for a 10 percent cut in rent.

Last year students won £1.2 million in rent reduction from management.

But student organisers are saying that this was a temporary measure and that there are more rent strikes on the horizon if management don't back down.

CONSTRUCTION

Skirmishes in battle for more rights at Crossrail

by SIMON BASKETTER

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS on one of Britain's biggest infrastructure projects downed tools after bosses tried to move a union rep off site.

Sixty workers at the Crossrail site on Tottenham Court Road, London, occupied the canteen last Wednesday. And the dispute has escalated into an unofficial stoppage.

Laing O'Rourke and its subsidiary Crown House refused to negotiate with unions and won't recognise the Unite union steward Terry Wilson.

Managers announced that Terry would be transferred off Crossrail altogether—prompting the protest and now strike from workers.

Bosses attempted to transfer Terry after he attended a protest at Crossrail over the bonus payments.

According to Terry, "I was elected by over 60 lads. It's on the back of the protest over getting the second tier payment.

"They want to transfer me completely off Crossrail. It's an attempt to chop the head off the snake and hope everyone else crumbles. But this is an attack on everyone and an attack on the union."

Union activists say they have been subjected to bullying, intimidation and surveillance at various Crossrail sites.

Workers voted to return to work on Tuesday morning.

Laing O'Rourke was also one of a raft of major building firms forced to apologise in May for its role in an



A PICKET line at the Tottenham Court Road Crossrail site

illegal blacklist that denied work to thousands of trade unionists.

Workers across the project are angry over Crossrail's refusal to stick to the national agreement, which allows for additional "second tier" bonus productivity payments.

Andrew Wolstenholme, chief executive of Crossrail, part of Transport for London (TfL), earned £910,000 in

2015, including £359,000 in "performance-related pay".

Yet Crossrail bosses have told workers to go back to the contractors, and the contractors say Crossrail is responsible for the payments.

The Employment Relations Manager at Crown House is former Unite national officer Brian Boyd.

Some Crossrail bosses appeared

on the back foot after they rescinded letters threatening workers who demonstrated with disciplinarys.

Workers employed by contractor Balfour Beatty at the Whitechapel site had received letters summoning them to conduct hearings after they left work to attend a demonstration at Crossrail last month.

But after they called a meeting to discuss the attack, bosses swiftly withdrew it.

One electrician told Socialist Worker, "The rank and file will stand by victimised stewards and further unofficial action will be forthcoming.

"There will be no rest now for Crossrail and its principal contractors."

There is a prospect of a ballot across Crossrail over the second tier in the new Year.

Concerted militant action will be needed against the Crossrail bosses.

A MAN who was working on Crossrail when a 30-ton concrete slab shattered his leg has been awarded a six-figure sum.

Liam Jennings was helping a crane driver on a construction site at Canning Town when he was hit by the concrete block being swung by the vehicle.

Metal pins were inserted to piece together his shattered hip. He also suffered nerve damage below the knee, which caused him to lose feeling and movement in his foot. Surgery to attempt to give him some feeling back was unsuccessful.

>>continued from p20 another year of hell."

Megan was pleased the council had been forced to back down over the New Year's Eve sackings and that it had "agreed to a full review of TAs' roles and responsibilities".

She said the TAs "will have no hesitation in striking again if the council drags its feet".

But Trish was "disgusted" at the announcement.

She said, "Durham Unison have ignored their members totally.

"Surely they should be working for their members and not the council?"

Unison also called off the ongoing work to rule. Kate was "at a loss as to why" the union did this.

She said, "It is very disappointing and I feel very let down by the union's lack of communication."

With the threat to their jobs, pay and conditions looming over them for the last year, some TAs have already voted with their feet. Some were even forced to sell their house.

There is a debate over strategy and how to win.

TAs must draw strength from their battle so far and stay united.

Officials may have handed councillors a lifeline.

But if the rank and file organise to demand accountability from their union representatives victory can still be theirs.



HOTEL WORKERS

Silver service workers can scupper the supper rush

RMT UNION members at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool are balloting to strike on 23 December.

It is one of the hotel's busiest days of the year.

The Britannia Group which owns the hotel has seen its profits rise by 100 percent.

The group has paid out dividends worth £35 million.

Ten staff members joined the RMT as trade unionists rallied outside the hotel last Saturday.

Some guests considered moving out of the hotel in support of the workers, who are on zero hours contracts.

The workers' pay is hard to live on and they suffer demeaning conditions such

as no sick pay.

Bosses are also trying to get workers to speed up so they can cut jobs.

On top of this the bosses spy on workers with CCTV cameras.

Strikes are vital to beat back this rapacious management.

The workers will need the support of trade unionists and socialists.

Support the campaign by letting the company know your disgust at their contempt for the workers who make the profits for them.

●Send Britannia Hotels a message. Go to bit.ly/2gHzlrX Or ring the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool on 08712220029

LONDON UNDERGROUND

Tube workers in dispute as bosses' cuts take their toll

TUBE DRIVERS' strikes on London Underground's Piccadilly and Hammersmith & City lines, set for Tuesday, were suspended by the workers' RMT union.

The union said that "all objectives in the Piccadilly line dispute have now been achieved" with further talks aimed at a long term agreement on the Hammersmith & City line.

Meanwhile, RMT union station staff are currently on an overtime ban, with TSSA union members set to join them from Thursday.

The dispute is over the impact of closing all ticket offices and replacing over 800 jobs with ticket vending machines—part of bosses' major station cuts programme.

A TSSA survey of members

revealed that staff report being on the receiving end of unprecedented levels of verbal and physical abuse from passengers.

Staff cuts have left many surface stations understaffed or with workers left to cope on their own.

During recent talks bosses conceded they would bring forward the recruitment of 100 extra staff on stations.

This shows they are under pressure but it is a drop in the ocean compared to what is needed to alleviate the ongoing staffing crisis.

Both unions also have mandates for strikes.

If safety is under threat the unions should call a strike and force London Labour mayor Sadiq Khan, who is also chair of Transport for London, to intervene.

STAND UP TO RACISM

Fighting to stop racism

MORE THAN 40 people joined a Stand Up To Racism vigil in Barking, east London, last week in support of Imran Khan.

Imran, the victim of an acid attack which left him with severe burns on his face, joined the vigil and said how positive it was.

Labour council leader Darren Rodwell told the crowd, "We won't tolerate hate and division in our community."

Last week also saw around 150 people gather in Tooting, south London, for a Stand Up To Racism public meeting with speakers including Moazzam Begg, Labour councillor Fleur Anderson, and Weyman Bennett.

RETAIL WORKERS

Debenhams Xmas pay

WORKERS AT Debenhams department store in Manchester scored a victory after bosses tried to push their December pay back until after the Christmas holiday.

Normally workers receive December's pay on the last Friday of work before Christmas. The changes would have caused massive disruption to minimum wage workers.

Bosses initially tried to argue December's early payment was a luxury.

But after a campaign which has seen the Usdaw union branch recruit, management backed down within four days.

One of the workers at the store told Socialist Worker, "We got together and held a meeting."

"That gave us the confidence to challenge management's decision."

EU LAW COULD DERAIL STRIKE

by **RAYMIE KIERNAN**

SOUTHERN RAIL was hit by a three-day train guards' strike and a drivers' overtime ban from Tuesday of this week.

The action is the latest step in a row over the imposition of driver only operation by bosses at owners Govia Thameslink Railway.

The impact caused severe disruption. Southern struggled to run even half of its train services.

Tory transport minister Chris Grayling called workers taking action "militants".

But striking RMT union member Mel told Socialist Worker, "He should really come out and job share with us and get a reality check."

The strike came as Govia bosses went to the High Court in a bid to stop a strike by drivers in the Aslef union.

Govia was seeking approval from judges this Wednesday that, under European Union (EU) law, strikes restrict its "freedom" to make money and impede passengers' "freedom of movement".



WORKERS ON strike at London Victoria on Tuesday

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

Tory anti-union laws have successfully been used twice this year to block drivers from striking.

Train drivers' union Aslef was ordered by the court to pay nearly £1 million in costs.

But passengers have faced

"travel misery" long before any industrial action began.

Despite the delays, cancellations, bullying of staff and lies pumped out by the firm the Tories back bosses to the hilt.

If judges grant the

injunction it will be a green light to every boss across the EU. As striker Victor told Socialist Worker, "If they rule for Govia, what is the TUC going to do about it?"

"It will mean that across every industry, every

employer can run to the courts to stop strikes."

This dispute has always been for high stakes.

Govia is paid a multimillion pound contract on behalf of the Tories to push through driver only operation.

If they win they will want to to roll out the attack.

Workers are fighting for safety for everyone. But the Tories are only interested in how bosses can increase profits at public expense.

Grayling was set to announce his plan to privatise Network Rail as Socialist Worker went to press. Handing responsibility for track maintenance to train operators is a recipe for disaster.

Warriors

The minister's band of free marketeers also plan to create the first fully privatised line in Britain between Oxford and Cambridge. Rail privatisation is deeply unpopular. Polls constantly show people back renationalisation.

Southern train guards and drivers are on the front line of this battle. The leaders of the trade union movement need to step up and fight alongside them.

For details of how to donate to the RMT strikers go to bit.ly/2h0WeV3

Send solidarity messages to the guards to 1885wackers@gmail.com

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Strikes force climbdown from council—but union officials call off action

DURHAM teaching assistants (TAs) have forced council bosses to retreat. But a chance for a clear cut victory was snatched away from them by union officials.

They are not beaten, just frustrated. TAs fought back against the Labour council's threat to sack them on New Year's Eve, rehire them the next day and cut their pay by up to 23 percent.

Protests, rallies and recent strikes have won huge support. The teaching assistants forced Unison union officials, the majority union,



Strikers' signs show what they stand to lose

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

to back their fight.

Those same officials manoeuvred TAs away from the very action that could have secured their victory before Christmas.

Last week the council finally buckled under pressure from the TAs' rank and file revolt and strikes, and announced a humiliating climbdown. It once wasn't prepared to budge.

But the council has only agreed to "suspend" the sackings not withdraw them.

Lisa, a TA, is against suspending strikes for "empty words". She

said, "I'm absolutely devastated, that's another Christmas ruined."

She feels the TAs' greatest strength at a crucial moment has been "undermined". She's right.

The TAs had bosses on the ropes. But their three-day strike, set to start on Tuesday, was called off without strikers getting a say in the matter.

Strikes this week could easily have been the tipping point that brought a complete surrender from the council.

The officials should have used the climbdown as a spur to intensify the action

and win a real guarantee over jobs and pay.

TA Claire told Socialist Worker, "My emotions are mixed. I'm pleased they have agreed to get back around the table but at the same time I'm very cautious."

"I don't trust them and feel they may be just trying to keep us quiet over the Christmas period because of the effect it's had."

"I do hope I'm proved wrong and eventually this mess is sorted."

"This has gone on for too long now and I refuse to go through

>>>turn to page 19